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Early Years at School

A Textbook
For Students of Early Childhood
Education

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Early Years at School

A Textbook for Students of
Early Childhood Education

BY ILSE FOREST

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With a Foreword by

WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK

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McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY, INC.

New York : Toronto : London

**To Robert and Elizabeth
To Jimmy and Margot
To John and Ymaiel and Stephanie
But most especially
To Martha**

Preface

This book is intended as a college text; it is offered in the expectation that teachers taking in-service courses as well as undergraduate students will find it helpful.

The author wishes to thank the authors, editors, and publishers who have granted permission for the use of copyright material. Among them the following have allowed the reproduction of extended quotations, essential in the development of the text discussions. Dr. William Jansen, Superintendent of Schools, New York City; Dr. Ruth Andrus and her associates in the New York State Education Department; the editors of the *Primary Manual*, Cincinnati Public Schools; the editor of the *Forty-sixth Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education; the Commission on American Citizenship, Catholic University of America; Harper and Brothers; The Macmillan Company.

Special acknowledgment and thanks are due Gertrude Grant, M.A., the author's colleague in the Department of Education, Brooklyn College, for valuable suggestions made in connection with Chapter XI, on "The Arts in Early Childhood Education," and for helpful criticisms of earlier chapters.

Finally, the author wishes to express her appreciation of the contributions made by her students in Brooklyn College, whose challenging questions were most helpful while this book was being written, and to thank Miriam Tabacoff and Dorothy Siani especially for their sketches of children's block-building.

ILSE FOREST

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Foreword

We live in an age of change. Among the instances of change, not least in importance is the change that has come into education. Many who know of schools only by their childhood experience of them a generation ago can scarcely conceive the extent and significance of the changes that have meanwhile taken place in the best schools of today.

In all this educational change, that found in the schools for the youngest has perhaps been the greatest. For, curiously enough, the extent and thoroughness of the conscious change in education decreases with the increasing age of the student. The college has changed least; the high school, somewhat more; the elementary school, much more; and the education for the youngest, most of all. Why conservatism should so act may seem strange, but it is a fact. The typical liberal arts college holds most tenaciously to the past; and it is only as we get further away from the direct power and influence of the college that the argument for educational improvement is allowed its due weight on true merit.

What shall we say is the chief characteristic of the new education for the young child? The answer seems clear. It is a regard for "the whole child," with perhaps especial regard for the accompanying emotional development. An earlier day counted that education properly consists in acquiring knowledge, knowledge formulated in books. This older conception of education reduced the learner to intellect and the intellect itself largely to memory. Now we know that the human organism normally acts as a whole, as a cooperating behaving whole; and that the educative effect of any act extends as far within and throughout the organism as the

behaving itself extends. In such an act the accompanying emotion serves normally to increase the vigor of the effort, shifting, it may be, from surprise to hope or fear, to set determination, to anxiety, to satisfaction, as the act develops from a surprise start to success at the end. If these emotional responses be thwarted or otherwise not properly "digested," so to say, they may accumulate in a way to upset the individual; so that, in the modern phrase, his "personality becomes maladjusted" and he acts out of keeping with the actual demands of the situation, unwisely and perhaps irresponsibly. To avoid all such or, if necessary, to remedy it, becomes thus a chief conscious concern of modern education.

Another phase of that old-time education was to assume that the child is naturally and innately bad and perverse. On this theory the first steps in dealing with a child were to "break his will"; as one great religious leader said, "make him do what he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to effect it . . . heaven or hell depends on this alone." Now we believe that the child is born neither bad nor good, but with potentialities for both. And what will develop with any given child depends mainly on what we who manage him do for him and with him.

In the light of our improvements upon these two older notions of education and child nature we now stress a positive program of child activity. First of all, we make each child feel secure with us. We have him live relaxed. We wish him to enjoy life and for that reason we wish him to engage purposefully in activities suited to his age and development — activities which increase, as he grows older, in range and complexity and in the conscious use of means to end. His true, all-round education results.

Some remnants of the old attitudes still linger — we are always plagued with instances of cultural lag. Some hard-hearted ones say that these newer ways of treating children will spoil them. The exact contrary seems most true. Such a charge is as far from fact as success lies distant from failure. The new education has adequate data of careful observation

to show that this program, properly followed, will upbuild the whole child into a vigorous healthy-minded personality, increasingly able and disposed to play his proper part in the social affairs of a democratic society.

It is this new and finer, more effective kind of education that Dr. Forest sets before us in her *Early Years at School*. It is a pleasure to see the thoroughgoing exposition that she gives to the various problems of early childhood and education. In it all we see helpfully illustrated the best modern theory for developing "the whole child," for promoting the balanced development of intelligence, emotion, and skill, for caring at one and the same time both for the proper social outlook and for individual poise and self-respect. Nor need any fear that the proposed program will either spoil the child or fail to give him a full proper start in the three R's. These matters are thoughtfully cared for.

As we read more and more of the book we feel that a new day has indeed dawned for the young child in school. We should like to hope that as this young child ascends the educational ladder he will — *mirabile dictu* — find an equally fine new day awaiting him at each higher level of his ascent. Even if this new day does not come quite that soon in the upper levels, we hope that it will not be unduly postponed. May all who read this book join in the effort to hasten that day.

WILLIAM HEARD KILPATRICK

Part I

The Child and His School

CHAPTER I

Early Childhood Education

Hold childhood in reverence, and do not be in any hurry to judge it for good or ill. . . . Give nature time to work before you take over her task, lest you interfere with her method. You assert that you know the value of time and are afraid of wasting it. You fail to see that it is a greater waste of time to use it badly than to do nothing, and that a child ill-taught is farther from virtue than a child who has learned nothing at all.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU¹

Early childhood education as we know it in postwar America expresses certain underlying principles, some of them drawn from the past, others in process of development as the result of recent and current research. Today educational practice starts with the initial assumption that the child as a human being has the right to health and happiness, as well as to all the freedom for self-expression which is consistent with satisfactory social adjustment. Play is recognized as being the best and most effective method of early education; it is respected for its social as well as its individual

¹ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, p. 456. Publishing data for incomplete references are given in the Bibliography at the end of this book.

values. The essential continuity of the growth process is fairly generally understood; in theory at least we think of "kindergarten" and "first grade" as providing suitable experiences for five- and six-year-olds in the same sense that "nursery" and "nursery school" represent the right environment for the youngest ones. The wisdom of encouraging group education for little children from the age of two or thereabouts, while not universally unchallenged, is widely admitted; the responsibility of democratic communities for assuring all children a right environment, regardless of age or financial status, is generally accepted. The definition and description of a "right" environment are in many instances left to experts in the field of child development.

It was not always so. The educational world of today has developed directly as the result of nearly two hundred years of reflection and effort; indirectly it is the product of more than two thousand years of thought. For long centuries childhood was believed to be a period during which the individual must be constrained and repressed, forced into as complete conformity to the adult pattern of life as possible. Play was suspect as an expression of original nature — an original nature thought to be sinful and depraved. Until quite recent times only a very few people saw that educating little children required any understanding of the child himself; he was regarded as a miniature — just like an adult, only smaller.

Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) was the first successful champion of the rights of children in the early modern era. He insisted that the child was a child of nature as well as a child of God; that one must study this young human being, since he is a *child*, not a miniature adult; that education is many-sided and not merely a matter of learning from books; that the child's stage of development must be taken into consideration in planning his education at any given period; that reading in Rousseau's day was "the scourge of infancy." Rousseau, in the opinion of one of his contemporaries, was

"given to brilliant paradoxes to the prejudice of sober and useful discussion." His psychology of childhood was faulty, judged by present standards, his philosophy of education inconsistent and highly impractical. His influence upon modern educational thought was nevertheless both constructive and profound.

To Friedrich Froebel (1782-1832) belongs the distinction of having formulated a theory of early education in connection with a detailed method of carrying it out. Froebel had an extraordinary sympathy for little children and a genuine understanding of them. It was because of this unusual insight that he properly evaluated play, so despised by most people of his time, as "... the purest, most spiritual activity of man at this stage [*i.e.*, childhood] and at the same time typical of human life as a whole. . . . It gives joy, freedom, contentment. . . . It holds the source of all that is good."² Unfortunately for the immediate future of the kindergarten, Froebel's philosophy of education was tinged with a confused mysticism, which adversely affected his practical suggestions concerning the content and method of education. But his theory of play was a lasting contribution, and the kindergarten as an institution became one of the most active growing points of modern educational practice.

Rousseau's naturalism with its wealth of implications and Froebel's doctrine of education through self-activity laid the philosophic foundations of the lower school we know today. The first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed the evolution of a new philosophy of education which owed much to these earlier thinkers, even though the later educational philosophers subjected the works of Rousseau and Froebel to penetrating criticism. Rousseau had thought of "natural development" as the final aim of education. He defended the "natural" child as the "good" child, and wanted to maintain this state of natural goodness by protecting the child from society. Froebel, too, thought of the child's

² Friedrich Froebel, *Education of Man*, p. 55.

original nature as good. He believed that through self-active play the young individual came to a realization of great truths, which were already present as "dim presentiments" in the infant mind. The aim of education, for Froebel, was to assist this process of realization by presenting the child with certain appropriate symbols of these latent truths. The "mother-play sequence," a collection of songs and finger plays, and the "gifts" or special play materials which Froebel laboriously devised, were intended for use as symbols, designed to interpret the universe to the kindergarten pupil, to awaken his slumbering presentiments of "the law of unity and diversity" which Froebel thought fundamental. John Dewey, and in greater detail William Heard Kilpatrick, indicated the fallacies of these beliefs, and the inadequacy both of natural development and the "unfolding of latency" (Froebel's expression) as educational goals. The child's original nature, Dewey and Kilpatrick believe, is neither good nor bad in itself, representing merely capacity for growth. "Immaturity," Dewey has written, "means the possibility of growth . . . the ability to develop."³ "Many of the child's impulses," Kilpatrick has explained, "in their direct form are not immediately suited to present-day social life."⁴ And again Dewey, "... what impulses are moving toward, not what they have been, is the important thing for parent and teacher."⁵

Both the earlier and the modern thinkers accepted the child as a "child of nature," but whereas Rousseau and Froebel thought of the natural man as good to begin with, Dewey and Kilpatrick merely concede him the potentiality for goodness. Rousseau explicitly made natural development the desired end-product of education; Dewey and Kilpatrick looked upon it as the starting-point. Rousseau's idea was to

³ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 49.

⁴ W. H. Kilpatrick, *Froebel's Kindergarten Principles Critically Examined*, p. 197.

⁵ Dewey, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

keep the child in his state of natural goodness by protecting him from society; the modern educator would develop the child's capacity for goodness through human association under intelligent guidance. While Froebel wanted to give the child's spontaneous play a stereotyped direction through the use of formal games and the Froebelian gifts, Kilpatrick has consistently advocated "whole-hearted, purposeful activity in a social environment" — the activity and the environment to supply the means through which potential goodness is transformed into actual goodness, the natural child educated to become a happy and effective member of society.

When Rousseau, and later Froebel, developed their educational theories they had little in the way of verifiable data to guide them other than their own limited experiences, and their ideas had no immediate effect upon the schools of their times. Today early education is grounded upon scientific research as well as philosophic reflection — research which has been under way actually since the turn of the century. Edward L. Thorndike published his *Notes on Child Study* in 1903; his work and that of his many students encouraged the study of child behavior under controlled conditions, the use of trained observers to gather behavior data, the keeping of meticulously accurate records. Out of this effort to gather facts about child development under conditions at least somewhat comparable to those of the scientific laboratory developed the movement for mental and educational measurement, a movement which has greatly influenced the curriculum and the teaching practices of the modern school. As early as 1890, G. Stanley Hall of Clark University began his investigations of the effect of school life upon the mental health of the child. In so doing he initiated the "Child Study Movement," which helped transform the kindergarten into a modern institution and was the forerunner of the wider movement for mental hygiene that gained momentum following the First World War. The latter movement, stemming as it did from a new psychiatry, gained a large follow-

ing among the intelligent public as well as among psychologists and educators. Concerted efforts were directed toward better mental hygiene in the schools, efforts which bore fruit in various ways. More conferences were arranged between home and school, more readily accessible psychiatric services were provided for child guidance, plans were laid for the training of teachers in child development and for greater flexibility in the organization of schools, so that the happiness and success of the individual child might be better provided for. These innovations were carried out to varying degrees in different communities. But even where organized mental hygiene programs were not initiated, a new attitude percolated into many classrooms, and some of the more hidebound among the teaching profession as well as the progressively minded began to assume greater responsibility for the emotional welfare of their pupils. The progressive schools by their very organization took greater thought for individuals than did the more conservative, and naturally led the way in the study of pupil adjustment.

The movement for mental hygiene provided an important means of educating the public to the need for suitable housing and equipment for the nation's schools. Provision for shops and laboratories and enough plastic materials to encourage creative work came to be recognized as essential for promoting the happiness and wholesome growth of the young child; a growing tendency to spend school funds as generously upon the kindergartner as upon his high school brother and sister was apparent during the late 1920's. The immediate effect of the depression following 1929 was to curtail expenditure for building and equipment, as well as to increase the size of classes and eliminate some of the school's activities which could not be shown to have immediate utilitarian value. Among the curtailments in many localities was included the closing of kindergartens. But fortunately for the preschool child and his parents, the crucial importance of the early years in the life of an individual had been im-

pressed upon the minds and consciences of intelligent people during the preceding decade. In December, 1933, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration allocated funds to the amount of \$2,000,000 "for the relief of unemployed teachers and those qualified to teach." As one form of this relief, the organization of nursery schools was recommended for children from two years of age to the age of school entrance. The report of the Administration published in April, 1934, recorded that up until that time 31 states had availed themselves of the right to establish nursery schools under the federal grant, that 61,000 children had been enrolled in the schools, and that four thousand hitherto unemployed teachers or those qualified to teach had been given employment as nursery school workers. Besides the purpose of giving relief to unemployed members of the teaching profession, these schools were "designed to promote the physical and mental well-being of children of unemployed parents."⁶ The schools were established only in those districts where school administrators were able and willing to house them as part of the public school organization. Under such conditions housing was difficult to provide and rarely ideal, the funds for equipment were very small, and the problems connected with the training and supervision of emergency teachers while in service were both numerous and difficult. Yet the project was full of vitality, and fine efforts went into carrying it out. Although the shortcomings of the emergency schools were many — inadequately prepared teachers, insufficient supervision, and lowering of equipment standards being among the more apparent — the importance of the endeavor in ushering in a new era for the child under five or six can hardly be overestimated. A precedent was set for federal participation in this area of education; above all, the pre-school child came into his own as a proper charge upon educational funds. This was highly significant of a new

⁶ Federal Emergency Relief Administration, *Monthly Report*, Dec. 1-31, 1933; Apr. 1-30, 1934.

social conscience concerning young children. Before this time, although the fact was inconsistent with an enlightened social and educational philosophy, so far as his education was concerned the preschool child had remained the concern of the home, the private school, and the philanthropic organization. The advantages of good nursery school experience were available only to the well to do and to the underprivileged who happened to be so fortunate as to be served by the best day nurseries.

The entrance of the very young child into a publicly supported school established his proper educational status, a status which was a bit precarious in some places, but which was in effect maintained until the beginning of the Second World War, when new social problems necessitated new efforts on his behalf. All the existing agencies for the day care of young children — public, private, and philanthropic — were immediately crowded to capacity through the exigencies of a country at war.

The possibilities of all-day schools for little children as profit-making undertakings were thoroughly explored; often in entirely good faith well-meaning persons who had young children of their own, or were simply fond of children, turned their basements or their back porches or even their living rooms into play spaces for children, and undertook to direct "nursery schools." Since many people who are fond of children and even many who have children of their own know comparatively little about the requirements for physical and mental hygiene, and still less about the techniques of guiding groups of twos and threes and fours, many of these ventures were positive hazards according to professional standards, and many more were distinctly not worth the small-to-moderate tuition charges made. But parents were most anxious to place their children in school — parents who must engage in war work, mothers who had to earn to supplement the family income, mothers who were frantic about their young husbands overseas and sought any form of dis-

traction out of the home. Hence, large numbers of little children were enrolled in poor and indifferent private nursery schools, sometimes with misgivings on the part of parents who knew better, sometimes in complete ignorance of what a good school might be. The tuitions which came in represented a high percentage of clear profit to the directors of the schools, and the size of tuitions increased with the cost of living and the demand for child-care service. Since existing day nurseries and other philanthropic institutions for children were not always well staffed and equipped to accommodate even moderate numbers, overcrowding made many of them hazardous, physically and psychologically, as child-care centers. A question of minimum standards of care far more serious than any raised by the F.E.R.A. schools naturally resulted from this immensely increased demand. Local committees with varying degrees of authority were established to cope with the situation, and in some communities (for example, New York City) the emergency authorities were gradually reorganized under the direction of a comparatively permanent committee, with power to investigate procedures and a sufficient staff to maintain prolonged advisory and supervisory contacts with child-care agencies. A health department permit in New York City was granted only to those schools and other child-care agencies which satisfied the requirements of the Day-care Division in every respect. Standards were made uniform, whether the agency caring for children under six was an expensive private school or a nursery serving a low-income group. Thus the right of the individual child to the best of educational facilities irrespective of his family's economic status was vindicated in practice as well as theory.

The attitude of the American public toward community responsibility for the preschool child has an interesting and varied history. A brief survey of this history helps in answering a question frequently asked as to the difference between a "day nursery" and a "nursery school." The correct response

today to this query is, "Every good day nursery is a nursery school as well," and the answer as to why they have ever been considered anything but equivalent to one another is to be found in the origins and purposes of each in our society. The purpose of the day nursery or crèche, in this country as in France, was to take care of the babies and young children of working mothers. The first crèche was opened in Paris in 1844, the first American crèche or day nursery was opened in 1854 in connection with the New York Nursery and Child's Hospital of New York City. In France, the crèches were accorded official recognition by an imperial decree of 1862, and careful regulations were laid down concerning their conduct if government subsidy were desired and the conditions under which they might be opened, whether or not such subsidy was requested. Much stress was laid upon the role of the French crèches in combating infant mortality. In contrast, we in this country failed to realize the importance of day nurseries. As late as 1923, Arnold Gesell wrote:

There is as yet no solid body of opinion regarding the functions and the future of the day nursery . . . standards are very uneven in different communities and often in the same community, and too often standards do not appear to exist at all. The nursery never comes under educational supervision, and only sometimes under compulsory medical supervision. Only in a few states are nurseries controlled through licensing and inspection. In short, the nursery is far from being a commonly accepted official agency of child welfare in this country.⁷

In the same year, a report made for the New York Academy of Medicine presented the following data concerning so fundamental and important a matter as day nursery housing in the city: in 32 per cent of the nurseries investigated the premises could be classified as good, 31 per cent were

⁷ Arnold Gesell, *The Preschool Child from the Standpoint of Public Hygiene and Education*, p. 41.

average, 22 per cent below average, 14 per cent unfit for use.⁸

Meanwhile the nursery school had already arrived upon the American scene. It had appeared as a much needed adjunct to the new Child Welfare Research laboratories, as a cooperative enterprise sponsored by young parents interested in the early education of their children, and above all as an American adaptation of an English idea. Just as distinctly as the day nursery was designed to relieve working mothers by offering their children shelter and physical care, so the nursery school was developed to *educate* little children and their parents as well. The day nursery, as a philanthropic institution, retained until recently some of the faults and weaknesses of nineteenth century charitable projects; the nursery school started off on a very different footing. The crèche was instituted and maintained in this country by a religious philanthropy similar to that which produced the English Charity School; the nursery school, on the other hand, was inspired by Robert Owen's Infant School, designed by its founder to educate self-sustaining members of a co-operative community, and conducted in connection with the cotton mills at New Lanark, Scotland. Owen was distinctly hostile to much of the religious benevolence of his time and the theories of human nature on which this benevolence was based. He devoted his effort to bettering the condition of his fellowmen through improving the environments in which they lived.

He expressed his beliefs thus:

From the earliest ages it has been the practice of the world to act on the supposition that each individual man forms his own character, and that therefore he is accountable for all his sentiments and habits, and consequently merits reward for some, and punishment for others. . . .

This is not a slight mistake which involves only trivial conse-

⁸ E. H. Lewinski-Corwin, Summary of findings of a report made for the New York Academy of Medicine, 1923.

quences; it is a fundamental error of the highest possible magnitude. . . . It has hitherto been the evil Genius of the world.⁹

To this great evil Owen thought the "great truth" sufficient to put an end:

. . . for every day will make it more evident that the character of man is, without exception, always formed for him; that it may be, and is chiefly, created by his predecessors: that they give him, or may give him, his ideas and habits, which are the powers that govern and direct his conduct. Man never did, nor is it possible he ever can, make his own character.

It is of little avail to give either young or old, "precept upon precept, and line upon line," except the means shall be also prepared to train them in good practical habits.¹⁰

Thus for Owen an educative environment in which little children could live as self-directing individuals became an important part of his plan for social betterment. The parents of the children in Owen's school were expected from the first to share in the support of the project. Owen wrote in his *Journal*, "I charged the parents, that it might not be considered a pauper school, three pence per month or three shillings per year, for each child, and of course they paid this most willingly."¹¹

While the charge was minute, the principle back of it is clear. Owen wanted the school to be so far as possible a co-operative enterprise. Furthermore, he wanted a rich curriculum for the school's young pupils.

The children (at New Lanark) were trained and educated without any punishment or any fear of it and were while in school the happiest human beings I have ever seen. The infants and young children, besides being instructed by sensible signs — the things themselves, or models, or paintings — and by familiar conversations, were from two to four years and upwards taught dancing and singing. . . .

⁹ Robert Owen, *New View of Society*, Essay I, p. 90.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 90ff. Italics as in the original.

¹¹ Robert Owen, *Journal*, Vol. IV, p. 202.

It was quite novel to train the children of the working classes to think and act rationally and to acquire substantial knowledge which might be useful to them through life.¹²

While Robert Owen was by far the most striking figure in the infant school movement of the early nineteenth century, some of his ideas and purposes were shared by socially minded individuals in other countries as well. In France, one J. D. M. Cochin, a lawyer by profession, seeing the need for a better early childhood education for children of all classes, rich as well as poor, gathered a number of them into two rooms and called this shelter a *salle d'asile*. In Italy, Abate Aporti, a Catholic priest, dissatisfied with the progress made by the children in the elementary schools of Lombardy which he had been instrumental in founding, was led to investigate the conditions under which these children had spent their preschool years. After a thoughtful consideration of the facts he discovered, Father Aporti drew up a plan for the establishment of an infant school in Cremona. He thought of trying the plan first with children of parents in easy circumstances, and he laid it before the government at Milan. The undertaking was immediately approved by an imperial decree of August 30, 1829, in which M. Aporti was requested "to inform the government from time to time of the working of the new institution, it being a most important desideratum to have a collection of facts in order that, at a future time, a greater extension might be given to similar establishments, should they prove useful." The following year, 1830, a similar plan for children of poorer parents was approved by the government. In 1833, "ninety-four boys and forty-six girls were educated gratis in the infant schools of Cremona."¹³

Owen was too far ahead of his time to exert a lasting influence upon practice in early education, in nineteenth century England. The infant school idea persisted, but the

¹² Robert Owen, *Life of Robert Owen, written by himself*, p. 193.

¹³ Abate Aporti, "Infant Schools in Lombardy," pp. 10-20.

founder's vision of a school where little children should be "rationally" educated through delightful experiences in a happy environment unfortunately was lost for a century or so. Until the educational reforms of the last twenty-five years English infant schools were grim places¹⁴ for the most part, their teaching practices witnessing to the truth of Rousseau's description of reading as "the scourge of infancy." It was not until 1908, when Grace Owen and Margaret McMillan inaugurated the modern nursery school movement in England, that ideals comparable to Robert Owen's were given substance in schools for little children. In 1920 Miss Owen wrote:

The years between two and six are years when the child is gathering ideas from his surroundings with amazing rapidity — the memories of this period are usually tenacious — his mind is constantly occupied with things present to his senses, and he receives multitudes of vivid impressions, the material for later thinking. Therefore it is important that he should be surrounded by an environment, both physical and intellectual, which shall bring to him a rich variety of ideas of a desirable kind.¹⁵

This twentieth-century school for little children, as its founders saw it, was planned not to give custodial care nor to impart a minimum of formal moral and intellectual education to the children of the underprivileged, but to enrich experience and to supplement rather than to supplant the educational activities of the home

The nursery school itself should be attached to homes, otherwise it is not a nursery, but only a receiving station. . . . A covered way . . . could be built out from every house or block of houses; and along this path little children could be taken by guardians or even by the teacher-nurses themselves every morning. In this way we can get nearer what is best in the good private nursery, viz: the nearness of the mother, and also her

¹⁴ See Jewell Lochhead, *The Education of Young Children in England*.

¹⁵ Grace Owen, *Nursery School Education*, p.22.

cooperation and even control. . . . No one has a right to ask that she part from her little one, and we shall not part them if this thing is well done.¹⁶

The time was then ripe. Slowly and gradually the new spirit made itself felt; nursery schools were made permissive as part of the National Schools of Great Britain by the Education Act of 1918, and local communities were thus enabled to use public funds for their support. Nursery school ideas gradually penetrated to the infant schools — and, above all, the work of the English schools acted as a stimulus and to a limited degree as a model for the American nursery school movement. During the 1920's and 1930's the distinction between "nursery school" and "day nursery" was gradually clarified, and as early as 1925 the New York Association of Day Nurseries reported that the Association had been "demonstrating the value of nursery schools" and had "replaced the kindergarten, in a number of cases, with newer forms of child education."¹⁷ Subsequent reports and proceedings bear witness to the dawn of a new era for the day nursery child; from 1925 to the beginning of the Second World War this child was enrolled, in an increasing percentage of cases, as a *nursery school pupil* — an individual to be studied and guided and educated, not merely a custodial charge. Today in this country, as the result of this new era, every good day nursery is a nursery school; in fact, in New York and elsewhere no nursery can qualify as such unless it provides *nursery school* experience.

While the changed attitude toward the child under six is one of the more striking contemporary evidences of a new social conscience about early childhood education, other important indications are also discernible. By 1929, the primary school had begun to shake off the ancient stigma of being an institution apart from the life of the community; it had begun to be interested in the whole growth of the child — not

¹⁶ Margaret McMillan, *The Nursery School*, p. 29.

¹⁷ *Annual Report of the New York Association of Day Nurseries*.

merely, as of old, in his acquisition of the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic. The many interests of childhood were gradually finding place within the school's walls. Although the economic depression and latterly the war have brought curtailments, such as the cessation of building, the shortage of materials, and the far more serious shortage of teachers, there are abundant signs that the new educational philosophy of the 1920's has not disappeared and will continue to withstand both shortages and adverse criticisms of "progressive education." It is well that this is so, for the child of today needs the rich environment of a well-planned modern school far more than did the child of seventy-five years ago. In the late nineteenth-century American home, the young people in the family could learn many things about the conduct of human life and the provision for its necessities. All sorts of handicrafts were still carried on in the home, and children could assist in the preparation and preservation of food. Far more frequently than now they enjoyed all the varied experiences of farm life. The joys as well as the difficulties of living in the out of doors were known to them; they could explore the woods and fields, finding in them numerous delights and enjoying as a matter of course the changing beauties of the seasons. Today the child of the same economic status may live in a small apartment. His food is purchased in cans or frozen packets and is prepared on a gas ring or an electric plate; of handicraft he sees very little. There is no one at home who has time to explain the processes of production to him, if indeed any of the adults in his family know anything about these processes themselves. There is no attic in which he may ransack trunks and enjoy the fun of dressing up. What he sees of natural beauties he sees in the movies, or as in a kaleidoscope through the windows of the school bus or the family car. Today the school much substitute for the home of yesterday through providing analogous experiences as best it may, and through interpreting to the child the often bewildering impressions

which pour in upon him on every side. This the modern school for young children is earnestly trying to accomplish, and a consistent effort to unify the lower grades with the kindergarten and the nursery school accompanies this attempt to make of the school a natural environment for the growing child. The continuity of the growth process, the fact that development proceeds at an orderly rate from year to year without spectacular leaps or breaks, is implicit in the teaching of Dewey and Kilpatrick; it has been objectively proved through the wide use of group intelligence and achievement tests, as well as through careful genetic studies such as those of Gesell and his associates.

Nursery school and kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade, overlap in many respects; babyhood interests persist to certain degrees throughout the period of early childhood education, more mature interests enter in gradually from two to eight, not suddenly and strikingly. A growing appreciation of this continuity of growth has helped modify traditional ideas about the housing and equipment of the primary school, just as a new sense of community responsibility for the little child has motivated the building of suitable nursery school structures. If the young school child, like his nursery school brother and sister, learns best through self-activity and still throws himself into activity which is largely playful, then he too must have space to play and material with which to make and fashion, as well as books to read. If his younger brother and sister learn through looking at things, and feeling them, and experimenting with them, so does the child of seven and eight. He too needs his visual aids, his collections of plants and other natural objects, his pets to tend and feed. All these requisites of a rich educational environment should be provided, and modern school buildings are planned to accomodate them and facilitate the children's use of them.

The "new leaven," as the movement for progressive education has been called, has slowly but radically altered the relationship between parents and school authorities, at least

in enlightened communities. Margaret McMillan's idea of enlisting the mother's "cooperation, even control" in the small child's nursery school experience is carried out to a certain extent in the new cooperative schools; the average parent reads with interest at least some of the good popular material on child development and education, and goes to the school for conferences with principal or teacher with far more interest and assurance than in the past. School authorities on their part recognize more frequently their responsibility toward parents, and are far better prepared than formerly to discharge their obligations in the direction of leadership, parent education, and sympathetic cooperation.

The new attitude toward early education is radically changing the character of teacher training for work in the lower grades. When children's life interests are brought into the classroom, teachers must be competent to understand and guide them; if the whole child is to become the primary school teacher's responsibility rather than just his learning of the three R's, she should understand the whole process of development as thoroughly as the nursery school teacher is expected to understand it. Since growth is gradual and continuous, the primary school teacher should be familiar with its manifestations during the whole cycle of early childhood; her study of child psychology should not be limited to the specific age group—nursery, kindergarten, or primary—which she desires to teach. Since the modern community recognizes the young child's education as a social responsibility, it is important for the teacher to know the community in which she is employed and in which her pupils live. Now that the right approach to early childhood education is so clearly believed to be a sociological one, the teacher requires sound knowledge in the field of sociology. These newer trends of thought are making themselves felt in revised programs for teacher preparation, and in changing certification practices. In many communities the teacher of young children must now be a college graduate, her transcript of record

includes courses in economics, sociology, and history, in literature and language, in music and art, as well as in education and psychology. In some states she must be qualified to teach at all levels from the nursery school through the second or third grade. The modern democratic community has accepted the fact that early childhood education is a difficult as well as socially important task, that the group education of three- and four-year-olds is a serious matter requiring the services of a mature person. Months and years of childhood formerly spent in the home are now in many instances spent in school, and thoughtful people responsible for the conduct of early childhood education are inclined to reflect with Rousseau that "it is a greater waste of time to use it badly than to do nothing, and that a child ill-taught is farther from virtue than a child who has learned nothing at all." The extension of the school downward into the nursery and outward to include the whole range of the young child's interests presents a serious challenge which can be met only by clear and effective thinking as well as well-planned and well-guarded experimentation.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Paraphrase Rousseau's statement appearing at the head of this chapter, using the contemporary language of modern child study.
2. In the management of a second-grade class, how would you as a teacher distinguish between "liberty" and "license" on the part of the group?
3. List some wishes or purposes cherished by seven-year-olds which the school should utilize for their educational value.
4. In what sense does a child at play resemble an artist engaged in painting a picture?
5. How do you account for the fact that we in the United States were so slow to appreciate the educational responsibilities of the day nursery?

6. Contrast Robert Owen's approach to the problem of educating the young children of industrial workers with the typical philanthropic approach of his time.
7. A day nursery is being pressed by interested citizens to transform itself into a nursery school. Some of the board members object because of the expense entailed by such a change. Explain, as to an objecting board member, why the change is expedient and what social values will be derived from it.
8. List some present-day social conditions which affect the home adversely as a place for the nurture and education of little children.
9. Is there a danger that the movement for nursery school education will injure the normal relationship between mother and child by removing the child too early from his mother's constant care?
10. Which studies in the curriculum of the liberal arts college do you think will contribute most directly to your preparation for teaching little children?

CHAPTER II

The Kindergarten and Educational Progress

We who are training the kindergarten leaders of the future. . . . Are we turning our students' faces toward new avenues of truth? Are we willing to see these investigated and tried out if found worthy of experiment; or are we still initiating them into a body of truth voiced by a great educational prophet three quarters of a century ago? . . . Are we urging our students to outstrip us, to press forward as fast as the vision of a new day dawns?

PATTY SMITH HILL ¹

Within twenty years of Froebel's death the kindergarten had spread through the efforts of his friends to almost every country in Europe, but its influence upon the conduct of early childhood education was exceedingly slight. In Germany Froebelian theories were distinctly unpopular; the bitterness aroused by the Franco-Prussian War was far too great to permit an institution of German origin to flourish in France. Beyond a certain amount of effect upon the teaching in the *écoles maternelles*, the kindergarten idea made little progress among French educators. In England, kindergarten methods

¹ From an address delivered in 1913.

were introduced into some of the infant schools, but the charming play spirit and emphasis upon happy social relationships which characterized Froebel's kindergarten at its best seem to have been quite lacking in the English institutions.

In our own country, however, the kindergarten has played a leading part in the development of modern theories of early childhood education. The same decades which witnessed the evolution of progressive theory and practice in early education as a whole saw the growth of the kindergarten itself from a little understood fad to a scientifically grounded institution — a growth fostered by an unusual quality of leadership which influenced the whole field of early childhood education.

Kindergartens found their way into the American public school as early as 1873, when, under the direction of William T. Harris, U.S. Commissioner of Education, Miss Susan Blow opened one in a St. Louis school. A few years later, at the Philadelphia Exposition, there was a demonstration of kindergarten work which brought it to the attention of the American people. After that kindergartens increased very rapidly. They were introduced into settlements and day nurseries and were organized privately for the benefit of the children of the rich. Gradually but surely public schools began to take responsibility for kindergarten education, and private enterprises became less and less important.

The American kindergarten enjoyed the great advantage of starting under the aegis of an unusually fine and cultivated group of people. Dr. Harris was a scholar and Miss Blow a brilliant woman. Both were members of the Concord school of philosophical thought, and they believed sincerely in the value of kindergarten education because they held the philosophy of Froebel in great esteem. Mrs. Horace Mann and her sister, Miss Elizabeth Peabody, also were members of the Concord school, and they too worked for the development of Froebel's educational theories. Miss Peabody

founded in the city of Boston, in 1860, the first kindergarten for English-speaking children in America. This pioneer kindergarten was under private auspices.

Intelligence and a certain scholarly interest were required to understand the basic principles of Froebel's philosophy of education. Therefore, in the early days of kindergarten training there were attracted to the profession young women of culture and ability whose work and whose devotion to their ideals were a great credit to the teaching profession. Unfortunately, the interest in Froebel's mystical theories and the preoccupation with these rather than with the study of children made these early kindergartners blind to the many absurdities and deficiencies inherent in Froebel's ideas. For absurdities and deficiencies there were, despite the fact that Froebel was probably the first educator to appreciate the value of play for its own sake and to state clearly that the self-activity of the child was the ideal method of learning.

Miss Blow, who was a German scholar, devoted much of her life to a study of Froebel's theories and to the development of a kindergarten program based upon them. This program — the "Blow Program," as it was called — quite generally determined the procedure in the kindergartens of the eastern United States for about twenty years. It was organized around the mother-play sequence of Froebel, and it prescribed the way in which the Froebelian materials, the "gifts" and "occupations," were to be used. The games, too, were planned in a definite order. Thus Froebel's theories, often, as he stated them, already remote from practical needs and interests of children, became yet more remote and far more rigidly organized in the hands of the first generation of American kindergartners. Preoccupied as they were with his mystical philosophy, his interpreters lost sight of the delightful play spirit which lent both charm and practical value to Froebel's own educational work. For instance, the mother-play sequence actually represents a series of simple, spontaneous games which mothers play with their babies. But the

charming simplicity of these natural games was quite spoiled in the kindergarten by a forced attempt to see in finger plays symbols of universal laws. Moreover, plays and games which were delightful for real babies became rather silly when they were used with children four and five years old, most of whom were quite beyond the finger-play stage. Where the Blow Program was the order of the day each mother-play was the center of the kindergarten's activity for approximately one week. In autumn one began with "The Play with the Limbs," pushing with the hands and the feet in time with the music of the game. There followed in succession the "Falling, Falling" — difficult to dramatize in kindergarten, for it meant the game of letting the baby fall a few inches and then catching him in his mother's arms — "All's Gone," "The Weather Vane," "Pat-a-cake," and all the others. "Pat-a-cake" was stressed at Thanksgiving, because it was supposed to symbolize cooperation in the production of the world's goods.

Play with the "gifts," a set of permanent play materials designed to give the child familiarity with the geometric forms and their derivation, was also prescribed day by day in the Blow Program. This was done in order to be quite certain that through his play the child would come to comprehend the "law of unity and diversity." The first gift was a ball, symbol of unity and completeness. It was presented to the child on a string, and he was directed to play with it in such a way that the directions "up and down," "side to side," "back and forth," "round and round," became clear to him. Four-year-old kindergarten children were expected to follow passively the directions of their teacher in going through these motions. The second gift was a set of three blocks — ball, cylinder, and cube. These represented unity in the form of the ball; diversity, in the cube with its six faces, twelve edges, and eight corners; and a form mediating between the two, a cylinder. The same blocks, presented to the child in a long wooden box, also represented rest, in the cube; motion, in

the ball; and a combination of rest and motion in the cylinder with its one curved surface. Small dowel sticks designed to fit into holes made in the blocks were also provided; the sticks could be inserted and the blocks twirled to illustrate to three-year-olds and four-year-olds the apparent changes of form in the cube and cylinder when in motion.

The third gift was the first in a series of four "Building Gifts." It was a two-inch wooden cube, divided into eight one-inch cubes. In kindergartens following the Blow Program, this was presented to the child in a box and very carefully opened so that he might see first a complete cube, then divide this complete cube into equal parts, and then recombine the parts to form the original unity. The normal impulse to knock the blocks down and play with them was curbed; each child was made to build in unison with the other children, following the teacher's direction until a complete sequence (or series) of forms had been achieved in an orderly fashion. These sequences were of two sorts: beauty sequences or geometric patterns; and life sequences, or the orderly transformation of the original cube into a "bed," two small "beds," two "chairs," and so on. At the very end of the period the children were allowed to invent in comparative freedom for perhaps five minutes, but any disorderly tumbling about of the blocks was frowned upon. The fourth gift was also made from a two-inch wooden cube, and was cut into eight rectangular parallelpipeds, or "bricks." The fifth and sixth gifts were cut from three-inch cubes, and included a greater variety of blocks than the third and fourth, but all the building gifts were presented in the same stereotyped fashion. True, the good kindergarten teacher was supposed to derive the forms and patterns through suggestion from the children, but these suggestions were rarely forthcoming without much prompting.

The remaining gifts were designed to acquaint the child with surfaces — rectangular, circular, triangular; with lines — curved and straight; and with the point, which was usually

represented by lentils, placed at the intersections of the lines appearing on the surface of the kindergarten tables, which tables were usually finished with plainly marked one-inch squares. All these gifts were also developed in sequences, designed to illustrate fundamental laws.

Froebel's "occupations" were a series of handwork activities: pricking, to teach the child how to arrange points to form designs; the sewing of straight lines, slanting lines, curved lines, circles, angles, squares, and designs made from these basic elements; weaving, to teach the child how to devise a surface; interlacing and intertwining of strips of wood and paper; and various sorts of paper folding and cardboard construction work. All were used according to rule, with some encouragement for very restricted invention; most were far too exacting from the standpoint of eye and muscle strain; none was planned to help the child's spontaneous play in any special fashion.

Not even the games of the traditional kindergarten escaped symbolic interpretation; the circle games, "Knights," "Pigeon House," "Bird's Nest," and the "Garden Bed" all were dramatized for the sake of their symbolic value. Toys and playthings other than gifts and occupations were tolerated for use before the regular kindergarten session began and by some of the freer spirits during the recess period. How seriously the conservative leaders of the movement disapproved of using ordinary playthings is apparent from the following excerpt from a monograph by Susan Blow entitled *Kindergarten Education*, published by the U.S. Department of Education in 1904:

Two great dangers now assail the kindergarten and threaten to impede its progress toward the realization of Froebel's ideal. The first of these dangers is reversion to instinctive games and traditional toys [among the latter menaces the monograph refers to tops, bean-bags, and dolls] tendencies such as these indicate a complete failure to realize what Froebel has done. He recognized in traditional games the deposit of unconscious reason . . . pre-

served what was good . . . omitted what was crude and coarse . . . and presented a series of games which is related to all the other kindergarten activities and which . . . win for the ideals they embody a controlling power over the imagination. In like manner from the traditional toys he selected those which possessed the most educational value, ordered them into a related sequence, and suggested a method by which they might be consciously used to interpret the child's experience and develop his creative power. If this transfiguration of the games is valueless, then the kindergarten has no *raison d'être*. But if Froebel has translated the hieroglyph of instinctive play and found means . . . which influence the growth of character and trend of thought, then the clamor for street games and promiscuous toys is educational atavism.

Such was the prevailing theory of the kindergarten during the first thirty-five years or so of its development in this country. Although the kindergarten room was often the one bright spot in an otherwise forbidding public school edifice or dingy settlement, the activities going on in this room were generally quite unrelated both to the child's spontaneous play and to the work of the succeeding school years. So isolated a form of education could not progress toward anything but the realization of Froebel's ideal as Miss Blow and other leaders of what was fast becoming a kindergarten cult saw this ideal. Until the kindergarten could be related both to the actual needs of young children and to the work of the school as a whole it could make no lasting contribution to modern education, and the devotion of kindergarten teachers to the Froebelian cause was a serious impediment to any such relating. A new leadership and a broader vision were called for to prevent the movement from growing in upon itself and to redirect it into the mainstream of educational progress. Fortunately this new leadership was forthcoming, and by the 1890's was beginning to influence the course of events by initiating a new, progressive kindergarten movement. As in the initial movement, the success of the new kindergarten was achieved through the labors of strong, win-

ning personalities; in the case of the progressive kindergarten, especially through the long and fruitful professional life work of the late Patty Smith Hill.²

Patty Hill was graduated in 1889 from the training school conducted by Anna Bryan in Louisville, Kentucky. From her own childhood it had been her ambition to devote herself to the care and education of babies, and the first training class of the Louisville Training School was opened at the exact time when Patty Hill had completed secondary school and was ready to begin preparation for a profession. With her family's consent and approval she accordingly enrolled in Miss Bryan's training class, and, as more than one of her classmates has testified, devoted herself to kindergarten work with rare singleness of purpose. Miss Anna Bryan had received her own training in Chicago, and had completely escaped the ultra-Froebelian influence. Endowed by nature with a playful and joyous spirit, she appreciated the value of play in the education of young children and felt keenly the limitations of Froebel's overly formal and stereotyped play materials.

In sharp contrast to Miss Blow's veneration of Froebel's theories stood Miss Bryan's frankly critical attitude:

When we realize the immense injury that may be done to any cause by an injudicious advocate, we may well pray to be delivered from our friends. . . . Because of the complete and comprehensive materials Froebel has given as a system there is great danger and temptation of mistaking the schools of work and the mathematical sequence in gift work as a prescribed, formal line of teaching, instead of as tools to be skillfully and discriminatingly used.

These remarks are taken from a paper Miss Bryan read to the 1890 meeting of the National Education Association, which she aptly titled "The Letter Killeth." She went on to say that when the gift sequences were not used creatively, when the child himself had no play purpose in mind, the

² Professor of Education, Columbia University.

activity was purely mechanical: "He has played from his spinal column, not from his heart." She inquired,

Can there be a more arbitrary performance, one which more utterly violates every law of the kindergarten, than to place a gift before the child, and while he, with tingling fingers and urgent activity, must sit passive, put him through a categorical questioning on the exciting subject of the numbers of edges, corners, and faces of the blocks? . . . If a child would never while in kindergarten formulate the knowledge of corners, edges, and faces, he ought to be regarded as less lacking than if he did not see how to fit and use these corners and edges in building.

Meanwhile, during the years in which kindergarten methods were moving quietly ahead in Louisville, John Dewey, who was to become the great philosopher of America, organized an experimental school at the University of Chicago, the purpose of which was to embody in a practical educational undertaking his experimentalist position in the field of philosophy. According to Dewey, "the educational process is one of continually reorganizing, reconstructing, reforming." As a social process, education is concerned with conscious guidance of growth, based upon a selection, among natural impulses, of those best adapted to the social situation. Patty Hill read an early article of Professor Dewey's, and saw immediately that here was a philosophy which gave justification in theory to what she and her associates were doing in practice. The education of little children should be conceived of as "a continuous reconstruction of *experience*," as active doing rather than passive following, as learning through problem solving rather than through the "awakening of innate ideas" through the use of such "symbolic" materials as the gifts and occupations of Froebel. Professor Dewey had known Miss Bryan and her kindergarten theories in Chicago, and on his part recognized this more freely organized kindergarten procedure as a concrete demonstration of his philosophic principles. The work Miss Hill was doing in Louisville interested Dewey immensely,

and his suggestions naturally stimulated further experimentation.

Gifted though she was with delightful social qualities, humor, and fine human insight, Miss Bryan nevertheless lacked the creative ability to substitute for Froebel's play-things something more suitable and enjoyable, to develop methods of enlisting the child's active interest and purpose. Realizing these things needed to be done, she encouraged experimentation by her students — above all by Patty Hill, whose unusual talents she soon recognized. Hence, very early in the days of the Louisville training school, children in the kindergarten of the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association were allowed to play imaginatively with the gifts, making paper dolls to fit the beds constructed out of the third and fourth gifts, and generally considering the gift blocks as toys rather than a sacrosanct collection of symbols. These innovations would have been frowned upon by Miss Blow and the other conservatives had they known innovations were going on; but Louisville was a little outside the beaten path of kindergarten development, and the result was that this experimenting went on quietly for several years without attracting much comment. Eventually the Louisville kindergarten became the Mecca of those who wanted to study innovations in kindergarten practice, and was thereupon regarded by the conservatives as a danger point threatening the values inherent in the pure Froebelian methods. A really bitter controversy ensued, which continued for more than ten years; the records of the meetings of the International Kindergarten Union for the years 1892 to 1905 give one a clear picture of the struggle. The conservative group believed that true Froebelianism must be defended at all costs. The "radicals," as the Louisville kindergartners and their friends were designated, held that progress was both desirable and inevitable. The progressive group had at least one asset against which no opposition could prevail: from the beginning they had allied themselves with the

projects of the leaders in the new movement for child study and child hygiene. G. Stanley Hall and William H. Burnham were the teachers of the newer group of kindergartners, and this alliance made the radical group invincible. The alliance also led to changes in the methods and materials of kindergarten education far more radical than the radicals themselves considered at the beginning.

The traditional kindergarten had been conspicuously lax in the attention given to the physical needs of the child; a teacher who showed too much interest in the health and nutritional status of her children was adversely criticized. The conservatives thought physical care was distinctly not the teacher's job. The newer group, on the other hand, emphasized the health needs of the child and saw the possibilities of the kindergarten as a health measure and safeguard. The very materials of the traditional kindergarten defied the laws of hygiene. For instance, no one could keep the crocheted woolen gift balls really clean, although they were dutifully laundered once a year or so. The elaborate moves required in the work with the building gifts and the fine coordinations demanded by the occupations were responsible for nervousness and tremors which the orthodox refused to recognize but which the progressives soon noticed, once Dr. Hall directed their attention toward studying the behavior of children rather than exclusively revering Froebel.

By the turn of the century, Patty Smith Hill was the recognized leader of the progressives, while Miss Blow remained the mentor of the conservatives. The personalities of these two women radically influenced the course of events. Miss Hill came of a family strongly imbued with the spirit of social service and characteristically eager to keep abreast of advance in scientific truth; she was as open-minded and intelligently interested in experiment as Miss Blow was conservative and almost fanatically determined to conserve traditional theories. In what amounted to a contest for leadership at Teachers College, Columbia, Miss Hill triumphed and was subse-

quently appointed head of the kindergarten department, from which strategic position she continued to encourage and direct experiments in the field of early childhood education, cementing the working relationship between the kindergarten and the child study movement, welcoming the study and criticism of kindergarten procedure by experts in other fields, facilitating research by every means at her command. From her earliest teaching to the end of her long and brilliant career, Professor Hill maintained the necessity of a sociological approach to the nurture and education of young children, making the kindergarten the testing ground of scientific progress in child guidance. With such leadership it is not surprising that the radicals in the kindergarten movement increased and flourished, while the conservatives in a few years were relegated to the archives of educational history.

The spread of the progressive-kindergarten idea created new problems in the training of teachers, especially the training of teachers in service. The newer kindergartens were gradually equipped with play materials designed to stimulate vigorous large-muscle activity and promote dramatic play. They were also provided with rove for making rugs and hammocks, with clay in generous amounts for making doll dishes, with wood for the construction of doll furniture and other toys. Large floor blocks replaced the tiny cubes of the Froebelian gifts. Few teachers at first knew how to cope with these innovations. To some of the lazy-minded it all looked very easy. Holding children to a series of formal gift and occupation lessons required persistence and some teaching skill; letting them play with dolls required little planning, and, some thought, less control. Certainly many kindergartens went through a period of confusion and readjustment. During the transition many student teachers escaped the discipline of Froebelian training and as a result frequently lacked clear-cut ideas and the skill to accomplish *something* with a group of young children. Many administrators seriously underrated the skill required for guiding

children in the progressive kindergarten. However, Professor Hill and other farseeing people were keenly alert to the teacher training problem, sparing no effort to solve it and constantly upholding the need for the scientific education of candidates desiring to work with the youngest ones in our schools.

A general clarification of the aims and methods of kindergarten education was achieved through the gradual unification of the kindergarten and first grade. Under the old regime the kindergartner had thought of herself as a woman set apart, with a vision impossible to share with her colleagues who taught in the primary grades. Often she openly deplored having to send "her" children on into the grades. The inference was that when they reached the primary grades they would no longer be understood and no longer educated according to ideal principles. First-grade teachers reciprocated by commenting none too gently on the fact that children promoted from the kindergarten were difficult to manage, more difficult than children who entered directly from home at the age of six. Once kindergarten teachers grew to be really critical of their own methods and attentively studious of children, this unhappy division began to wear away. Study soon showed that the kindergarten and the first-grade child were so nearly alike that it was senseless to make much distinction between them. Mental testing presently proved that in actual mental age there was great overlapping between the kindergarten and first-grade children. Why, then, should reading be forbidden the one and forced upon the other? Accordingly, "connecting classes" were formed, in which older kindergarten children were taught reading. Sometimes the first-grade teacher went into the kindergarten room to do this teaching; sometimes the children were sent to her. In other instances the kindergarten teacher prepared herself to teach reading and carried the program forward without help from the first grade. Then, too, kindergarten activities began to be extended upward into the first

grade. If the child of five derived joy and benefit from project work and the free use of plastic materials, why not the first-grade child of six? One barrier after another was broken down, until in many schools a quite complete unification was achieved.

The process of unification began with the first informal visits of first-grade teachers to kindergarten rooms to get ideas on a few subjects; but it was furthered with great vigor by the general movement for progressive education, by the development of mental and educational tests, and by the gradual evolution of the philosophy of education so ably taught by Professor Dewey and Professor William H. Kilpatrick. Rigid division among parts of the school process was impossible according to this philosophy, which took as its basic principle the essentially unitary character of the growth process, and theoretically admitted no gaps between the educational policies of the kindergarten, the grades, the secondary school, and the college.

Speaking in 1916, Patty Smith Hill mentioned "three distinct stages of the kindergartens of yesterday." The first of these was the naïve stage, in which the kindergarten was simply the concrete expression of Froebel's educational ideals. The second period, according to Professor Hill, was a period of arrested development: "the kindergarten fell in love with itself," and kindergartners as a whole formed an exclusive, self-satisfied, rather intolerant group. The third period was torn by the strife of opposing factions, conservatives and radicals. The fourth period represented the kindergarten's coming of age, with many of its leaders "ready to forswear both the name and the system, when better ones are found." At this fourth stage the kindergarten was ready to adopt and to nurture a sister institution, the nursery school, which, as "a newer form of child education," was presently to replace the kindergarten in caring for the needs of the youngest children.

³ See Chap. 1, p. 9.

Kindergartens in many places had welcomed children as young as three before the advent of nursery schools. Patty Hill's own enthusiasm for the welfare of the littlest ones had prompted her to admit real babies into her first kindergarten, conducted in the early 1890's under the aegis of the Louisville Free Kindergarten Association. The Association was organized as a movement for social betterment, and at first the majority of parents sending their children to the kindergartens were ignorant and indifferent. In many cases the families lacked the interest and initiative to get the children out of bed and take them to school; to assure attendance, teachers and normal school students were obliged to call for their young clientele morning after morning, often to find the family still in bed. The kindergarten child in these instances would crawl out of bed, pick up a crust of bread, and eat it as he followed along to school. So the first hour of the day had to be devoted to cleaning up the children; soap, warm water, and towels were much in demand. Pinafores were made for the small pupils, and these were kept at school because at first any clothes sent home would have been sold. Very gradually the good work made itself felt. The parents noticed the cleaned-up appearance presented by their youngsters when they returned home, and began to do a little cleaning up themselves. By and by it was possible to send the pinafores home for washing, and the clothing supplied by the parents also improved. The director of a free kindergarten visited every home, looked after the sick and unemployed in her neighborhood, and held regular meetings for parents each month. She was the first one to be sent for in sorrow, want, or death; the first person notified when the father was out of work. Indeed she was not only the teacher, but the philanthropist and friend of the locality in which she worked.

The "Parent Kindergarten," as the first group to be formed was called, was housed in an old mansion left deserted through a change in the residential district of the city. The

house afforded spacious quarters, and offered all sorts of possibilities for the care and comfort of kindergarten babies. Patty Hill, whose absorbing interest was the growth of children, not the development of an educational system, saw no reason why children younger than three might not come to the kindergarten, as long as they were provided with the routine which tiny tots require — as long as they might be bathed and fed and put to bed in the course of the day. So babies as young as one year were welcomed in the Parent Kindergarten, and were petted and tended as babies should be. Was this, the conservative kindergartner of that day would ask, a part of the "Curriculum"? It was, as Patty Hill saw the curriculum for little children in 1889; it is, in that most modern venture which she later sponsored, the nursery school.

But Miss Hill's understanding of very little children's needs was rare in the teaching profession, and while the babies she befriended were given just the sort of care and nurture babies needed, three-year-olds in the Froebelian kindergartens accepting young children were expected to follow a modified Blow Program, and their physical welfare received no more thought and attention than did that of the older children in the same kindergartens. Intentions, among the conservatives, were excellent; understanding of child needs was negligible. And even among the radicals the preparation of teachers was limited to preparation for working with the four-and-a-half- or five-year-old kindergarten child. Almost from the beginning of her work at Columbia, Professor Hill tried to remedy this situation, sponsoring demonstration groups of three-year-olds in connection with her graduate courses, and insisting upon the importance of understanding the younger child even though one were a teacher of fours or fives. Her enthusiasm for nursery education led Miss Hill to follow with attention the accounts of work done in government nurseries for the children of munition workers during the First World War; she also investi-

gated the records published here of the nursery school work done in England. Finally, in the summer of 1921, Miss Grace Owen, a prominent English nursery school worker, was brought over to lecture at Teachers College, Columbia University, through Miss Hill's influence and effort. In the spring of 1922, another English nursery school worker conducted a demonstration in the Manhattanville Day Nursery of New York. Students at Teachers College had the benefit of directed observation of and participation in the demonstration. While there were some fairly serious misunderstandings among nursery school and kindergarten teachers during the early years of nursery school education, principally created by the kindergarten teacher's fear that the nursery school would steal her thunder — and the youthful conceit of the nursery school teacher, priding herself on being "quite the latest thing" — kindergarten leaders on the whole welcomed the nursery school with enthusiasm. In 1929, for example, the International Kindergarten Union undertook a serious reorganization of its purposes and activities, emerging from the reorganization with a new name, the Association for Childhood Education, an association interested in the whole preschool period, not merely the four- and five-year-old kindergarten child.

✓ An account of the modern kindergarten is scarcely complete without some mention of the Montessori schools, even though the influence of these upon the course of events in early education was comparatively slight. Maria Montessori was deeply interested in the welfare of little children, and her work was a challenge to the kindergarten and an encouragement to many persons interested in early childhood education. A physician in a psychiatric clinic in Rome in the 1890's, she worked out a series of sense-training exercises and a set of equipment for use in the training of mental defectives. Later she conceived the idea of using these materials in the education of young normal children. The municipal government of Rome made it possible for Madame

Montessori to put her plans into effect by inviting her to open a school for young children in a model tenement block which had just been erected. She called her project a *casa dei bambini* (babies' house), and her purpose in the *casa* was to create for the young children of working mothers a wholesome environment which should serve as a demonstration of proper methods of child care. She introduced the sense-training materials in much the same way as the early kindergartens used Froebelian gifts and occupations. However, in one important respect her method differed from the Froebelians': instead of placing the responsibility for directing the work upon a teacher, the material itself was supposed to be corrective. Each child was permitted to choose what material he preferred to work with, but he must work with it in such a way that he correctly performed the task set by the material. For instance, one unit of the didactic apparatus is the "Montessori tower," a set of nine graduated cubes which the child was expected to pile correctly, with the largest at the bottom and the smallest at the top. He was not permitted to vary this performance in any way; for example, he might not turn his tower into a train and push it about the floor. Should he persist in doing so, the tower was removed, and he was directed to select another plaything.

One of the most interesting activities in the *casa dei bambini* was the preparation and serving of the midday meal. In this the children participated with great joy to themselves and great appreciation on the part of visitors. The picturesqueness of the Montessori school and Madame Montessori's own charming personality were very impressive, and soon a *casa dei bambini* for the children of the rich was opened in Rome. The idea spread to England, where Montessori schools became very popular, and also to America, where they were critically examined.

Madame Montessori lectured in America in 1913 and 1914, illustrating her description by moving pictures of the children at work and play in her schools. Interest was aroused, and

Montessori schools were opened under private auspices, both settlement schools and private schools. However, the idea never took very firm root in American educational thought because of the progress which had already been made here in the study of children and the development of a consistent educational psychology. Madame Montessori's educational work was in many ways delightful and successful, but her philosophy and psychology have never stood the test of frank scientific criticism. Her theory of sense training is based upon a discarded "faculty psychology," and her very slight provision for dramatic play and imaginative work also seems a shortcoming from our American point of view.

Yet her work has not been without some effect. The importance of letting little children participate in the practical work of the school was impressed upon kindergartners, and the Montessori emphasis upon a passive, quiet teacher was a good corrective for the average overstimulating kindergarten director. Sensory games came into new vogue, and in many places some parts of the "didactic apparatus," as Madame Montessori designated the sense-training materials, were introduced for use with the youngest kindergarten children.

In the laboratory schools which developed in this country between 1910 and 1925, the position of the kindergarten was strategic. The purpose of these schools was to build a new curriculum, and to permit highly trained teachers to experiment with new methods of teaching. Historically, the curriculum had been developed "from the top down," here as in European countries. The lower school had existed to prepare children for the upper school; the upper school prepared for college and university. Such a system, based on "deferred values," was incompatible with the new philosophy of education. The laboratory schools set to work to develop a curriculum "from the bottom up," based on child experiencing rather than adult logic. For such a development the kindergarten was the natural starting point, and kindergarten teachers, trained to guide children rather than to drill them

in the three R's or cram them with facts, were widely invited to take charge of classes in the lower grades. Almost without exception these teachers undertook further university study of education and psychology — large numbers of them studied under the direction of Professor Hill at Teachers College.

In this way, the kindergarten, originally developed through the blind faith of a small group of individuals in a rather fantastic philosophy, actually became the starting point of the scientifically grounded modern school for young children. This development was possible because the progressives among kindergarten leaders of thirty-five years ago had the courage to "turn their students' faces toward new avenues of truth," and, to quote Professor Hill once more, "stood ready to forswear both the name and the system should better ones be found."

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. "Education is a function of time, place, and circumstance." Discuss how the truth of this statement was demonstrated in the development of the progressive American kindergarten.
2. Impelling personalities played a very important part in the development of progressive education during the first quarter of this century. Are individual personalities as important today in achieving further progress, or is the quality of leadership needed now different from that required in 1900?
3. From the quotation in this chapter, explain what Miss Blow and other conservative kindergartners thought about the educational value of play.
4. To what extent is sentimentality a threat to the wholesome education of small children today? Do you think this quality has affected kindergarten education in the past?

5. What is the impulse of the average five-year-old when he is presented with a set of building blocks? How did Froebel's gift lessons violate what you know of the principles of child psychology?
6. What were the most cogent criticisms of the Froebelian kindergarten offered by Professor Hill and the radical group?
7. Compare the role of the kindergarten teacher as Miss Blow saw this with the same role as envisaged by Miss Hill.
8. The Froebelian kindergarten almost amounted to a cult; as you read our contemporary discussions of education, do you find any evidences that groups of educators in the profession are actuated by firmly entrenched beliefs?
9. Do you know any games enjoyed by children in which success depends upon acute sense perceptions? How does the modern teacher's conception of the educational value of these games differ from Montessori's?
10. To what areas of scientific thinking should the alert kindergarten teacher of today be especially sensitive?

MONTESSORI, MARIA: *The Montessori Method* (3d ed., trans. by Anna George), Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, 1912.

Madame Montessori's description of her theory and method.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION: "The Kindergarten and Its Relation to Elementary Education," *Sixth Yearbook*, Part II, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1907.

Contains discussions by Ada V. S. Harris, E. A. Kirkpatrick, Maria Kraus-Boelte, Patty S. Hill, Harriette Melissa Mills, Nina Vandewalker.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION: "The Coordination of Kindergarten and Elementary School," *Seventh Yearbook*, Part II, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1908. A supplement to the *Sixth Yearbook*, Part II. Contains articles by B. C. Gregory, Jennie B. Merrill, Bertha Payne, Margaret Giddings. Emphasizes "the practical problem of how to coordinate the work of kindergarten and first grade," in contrast to the more theoretical discussion in the *Sixth Yearbook*.

NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF EDUCATION: "The Kindergarten in Relation to Preschool and Parental Education," *Twenty-eighth Yearbook*, Part I, Ch. IX, Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Ill., 1911.

CHAPTER III

The Child from Two to Eight

The child's personality is a product of slow and natural growth. His nervous system matures by stages and natural sequences. . . . All his abilities, even his morals, are subject to the laws of growth. The task of child care is not to mould the child behavioristically to some pre-determined image, but to assist him step by step, guiding his growth.

This developmental philosophy does not mean indulgence. It is instead a constructive accommodation to the limitations of immaturity.

ARNOLD GESELL and FRANCES ILG ¹

The American progressive school of the 1920's was child-centered in name and to a great extent in fact. The main emphasis in this school was upon promoting the development of the individual through giving him every opportunity for creative self-expression. Sensible and thoughtful progressives understood that self-hood is an achievement rather than a starting point, that the rudimentary self of the child can only attain true individuality through socialization, through becoming an integral part of the culture into which he is born. Less sensible enthusiasts stressed the uniqueness of

¹ Arnold Gesell and Frances Ilg, *The Child from Five to Ten*, pp. 35f.

each personality somewhat to the neglect of its sociality, forgetting that self-realization is impossible apart from association with one's fellowmen. Both the wise and the unwise alike suffered from poverty of factual knowledge about the normal course of child development, about the laws of growth which govern the progress of the newborn to adulthood through infancy, childhood, and adolescence. In 1927, Gesell² described the task of the student of child development as consisting in making innumerable observations which should result in accurate pictures and descriptions of every aspect of behavior at successive age levels. This laborious method, Gesell explained, is analogous to that employed by the morphologist in order to achieve a complete picture of the structure of the nervous system. The results in the field of human behavior should be roughly comparable in their completeness to the results in morphology.

In the intervening years, not only Dr. Gesell and his associates but many other investigators have diligently accumulated facts and thus endeavored to put the study of child development upon a scientific basis. So successful have these efforts been that it is now possible to speak with a measure of assurance about the characteristics and needs of a two-year-old, a three-year-old, an eight-year-old, and to talk about developing "an educational program geared to child development."³ Twenty years ago the question of how much freedom or how much direction is good for children at various ages was discussed on philosophical grounds; now the same discussion can be carried on by quoting facts about "growth gradients." A gradient is defined as "a series of stages or degrees of maturity through which a child progresses toward a higher level of development."⁴ Growth gradients in the social and emotional areas of behavior rather than theoretical preferences, influence the enlight-

² Arnold Gesell, *Infancy and Human Growth*.

³ Arthur T. Jersild, *Child Development and the Curriculum*, p. 11.

⁴ Gesell and Ilg, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

ened school of today in determining the variety and degree of adult guidance in the kindergarten, the third grade, the nursery school. Methods become "a constructive accommodation to the limitations of immaturity" since the scientific study of child development has taught us something of what these limitations are.

It is by no means intended to imply that growth gradients are absolute standards to be rigidly applied in the guidance of individual children. On the contrary, to quote Gesell and Ilg, they "... are not offered as norms of absolute ability, but as approximate norms of developmental sequence."⁶ The same authors offer the comment that "every child is an individual and ... travels by his own tailor-made schedule."⁶ Taking a very simple "gradient" as an illustration, Gesell's studies show that at twelve weeks babies, on the whole, look at a little red cube when such is presented to them. At twenty weeks they will generally not only look but reach toward the cube; at twenty-four weeks they look and grasp with the whole hand; at thirty-six weeks the grasp is made deftly with the fingers; at fifty-two weeks the cube is not only neatly grasped by thumb and forefinger but also deftly released; at fifteen months the baby can look at the cube, grasp it, and release it to build a tower of two cubes. There will be individual differences among babies in this precise time schedule, but the *sequence* is practically universal. The cube is looked at before it is approached, approached before it is grasped, and so forth, even though Baby A may begin the process sooner than Baby B and perhaps go through the sequence more rapidly, while Baby C may begin later and take the steps more slowly.

Cultural factors, too, influence the course of development as pictured in published norms and gradients. Nursery school children coming from families in the Greenwich Village section of New York City vary in their play activity,

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

personality patterns, and creativeness from nursery school children living in the mountains of Tennessee.⁷ The mountain children are affected in their personalities by the warm security which they find in their own homes, the city children by the stimulating influences of an urban environment. It is therefore a misuse of described stages of development to apply them rigidly in planning for any particular child or group of children, just as it is lacking in judgment not to use them intelligently for what they are: valuable frames of reference.

THE TWO-YEAR-OLD

The child travels a long way on the path of development from the day he toddles to nursery school to the day he enters third grade. In order to "assist him step by step, guiding his growth" it is necessary to know something about the stages of maturity he lives through as he progresses from the youngest nursery group to the top of the primary school. At two he is, as Gesell and Ilg put it, "an infant-child," and according to good current opinion a doubtful candidate for nursery school admission, except under special circumstances. Measurements indicate that he has grown a lot since he was the age of eighteen months: on an average he is two inches taller and three pounds heavier. He can run without falling, although he tumbles easily because he can't slow down or skirt obstacles in his path. He is still practicing the art of walking, and tries tricks and varieties from time to time to prove to himself that the activity is under control: he will walk up on his toes, or for a change try a rolling gait. He uses three-word sentences upon occasion, but he is a master of the art of eliding; he can do without any of the parts of a sentence — subject, predicate, or object — and he drops letters from familiar words *ad lib*. He relies upon tone and emphasis to make his meaning clear. He has been getting acquainted with our contemporary culture for twenty-four

⁷ Claudia Lewis, *Children of the Cumberland*.

months, and with some persuasion he will accept a nursery school teacher as guide, philosopher, and friend if she can be a skillful mother substitute. If admitted to a group of persons his own age probably he will at first play strictly by himself, then begin to watch others, first just curiously, then with direct interest, understanding, and imitation. Once the ice is broken and he feels at home, he does not object to being at close quarters with his fellows. A group of twos will swarm in and out of sandbox or wading pool, with John's heel grazing Mary's cheek and Susan's hand pressing down on Jane's stomach, with only the rarest expressions of annoyance. Gesell and Ilg say two has "a robust sense of *mine* but a very weak sense of *thine*." Especially if he is a big, sturdy-looking baby his maturity is sometimes over estimated and his entrance into nursery school correspondingly premature. The two-year-old as a matter of fact is still such a baby that unless the group is very small, the school's physical setup ideal, and the teacher an intelligent, mature, and truly outgoing person, he is probably better cared for at home unless there is some very weighty reason for placing him elsewhere. He is normally very strongly attached to his mother, with whom he feels completely secure; a failure in this relationship resulting in frustration and aggressive behavior would be a basic reason for seeking help through placement in a school of proved excellence, under psychiatric guidance. A serious economic complication, necessitating that the mother work, is another thoroughly acceptable reason; perhaps very crowded or undesirable conditions at home, beyond the family's power to remedy, should be mentioned as another. But under average circumstances authorities in the field are now inclined to question the wisdom of a forced separation from the mother, at the sensitive age of two.

The responsibility which the teacher of the twos is required to assume is great. No matter how limited the enrollment, she must never be left without assistance. As a rule, two-year-olds neither ask for help nor come to get it; therefore the teacher must be constantly on the alert to give

help unsolicited. This is a very difficult age for the child to be separated from his mother; when the separation must be made, the teacher must be prepared to help him readjust by giving him warm, genuine affection and support, for *at this age adjustment is effected through people.*

If two-year-olds are accepted in nursery school, they should be provided with a comfortable nursery differing in no respect from a well-equipped home nursery. For out-of-door play a sand or pebble pit is the best center of attraction, but careful supervision of each child is necessary to prevent sand or pebbles getting into eyes, mouths, noses, and ears. Pull toys and kiddie-cars are good equipment; so are soft, washable nursery dolls and animals. It would be hard to overstress how much individual care and attention are required to conduct a two-year-old group wisely and safely.

Still other considerations in addition to those just mentioned may be brought forward to explain why authorities are skeptical about the wisdom of nursery schools for two-year-olds. Teachers gifted with the requisite poise, physical endurance, and unaffected love of children to respond to the demands of a group of twos are comparatively rare, and to the personal qualities listed must be added the experience and intelligence requisite fully to understand what the two-year-old requires of a mother substitute. The education of twos in a nursery school, properly planned, is exceedingly expensive; and while expense should not be a consideration in a truly enlightened community in the long run, it is often a staggering difficulty at a given moment. "Perfection or nothing," a proper slogan at all points in the educative process, is the only attitude with which to approach school care of very little children.

THE TWO-AND-A-HALF-YEAR-OLD

Two-and-a-half is a difficult age to cope with, perhaps the most exasperating age in the preschool period. "No-no-no!" is a familiar response to an innocent adult request, and the same negative young person will the next minute put his

hand confidently into the adult's, smile happily, and proceed to cooperate in the activity he has just vehemently declined. Two-and-a-half is a transitional stage; the youngster is aware of alternatives — as Gesell puts it, "life is now a two-way street" — and he is quite incapable of making easy decisions. As between cooperating and refusing, running out of the door or staying in the playroom, grabbing a toy or letting another child have it — he really needs to try out both possibilities in each pair before deciding which to do, which makes life difficult for all concerned, and especially for a mother who has to combine caring for the youngster with household duties, perhaps with the care of a very small brother or sister. If then at this age the child is physically up to par and a good play group or nursery — still very small and very carefully supervised — is available, many authorities who demur at twos will give their blessing to nursery school six months later. Here the youngster can work out his problems in the society of his peers with the help of a teacher who is prepared to love him for what he is, who has time to give him but not enough time to smother him with care, and who is not herself emotionally involved with his choices among conflicting possibilities. Two-and-a-half needs a great deal of help in adjusting to his age group, for the obvious reason that everybody else in the group is going through the same confusing period. Parallel play is usually preferred, and often the best way to manage a play period is to supply the same play equipment for several children, so that each can run his own little game by himself. Two-and-a-half is more independent than he was six months earlier, but he still needs a great deal of help in managing himself and plenty of adult reassurance to give him emotional security. Opportunities for safe play with physical apparatus are important for this age level, both to further the development of motor skills and to relieve social tensions. As Harriet Johnson wisely commented many years ago,⁸ the physical environment is predictable in its responses both to use and

⁸ Harriet Johnson, *Children in the Nursery School*.

to abuse; playmates are not. A seesaw abused Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday in the same fashion will occasion the same bump each day. Mary and Junior usually do not react just the same way each day to having hair pulled or toys snatched away. What happens to the aggressor varies with the mood of the victim; of course this variety adds interest to experimental attacks, but it does not make learning easy.

This older baby still enjoys the sand or the pebble pit, quite as much as he did some months ago. Manipulation is more varied; more changes are rung on the system of moving the sand from one place to another, more receptacles are used; tea parties of sand are increasingly popular, puttering with water results more frequently in sand mounds. A hammering board is a great joy, quiet moments looking at picture books with an adult are enjoyed, it is fun to squeeze and pound clay; easel painting is liked by many, and so are the simplest of puzzles. Dolls travel about in carriages or carts, are vigorously tucked into beds, and fed with nursing bottle or cup.

Careful supervision of all this activity is imperative, with special caution about watching what travels into ears and nostrils as well as what is put in mouths. The whole environment for two-and-a-half must be well planned from the point of view of safety. Doors must shut firmly, stairs be protected by gates, exits to the out of doors well guarded; for this age is given to wandering, and seldom turns about when called. The teacher needs all the help she can get from a physical setup which puts the need for prohibition at a minimum. She will have trouble enough as it is, and the fewer "don'ts" the child hears at school the better, since many "don'ts" are necessary in the average home.

THE THREE-YEAR-OLD

Gesell and Ilg picture the three-year-old, in contrast to the child of two-and-a-half, as having himself nicely under control considering his brief thirty-six months of social experi-

ence. He is quite able to choose one of two simple alternatives, and as he typically loves to please he will as likely as not choose the one mother or teacher would like. His relationships with his age group are getting better. Occasionally there are substantial periods of really cooperative play in the three-year-old group. But at this age children are still partly in the state of considering an obstacle an obstacle, whether human or physical, and inclined to treat all obstacles the same way, whether or not they have feelings. They are ready to learn more humane techniques, for three-year-olds are sociable people at heart; they are simply at the very beginning stage of acquiring poise. Plenty of encouragement, reassurance, and friendliness on the part of adults in the nursery school are needed to help the three-year-old group learn the rudiments of pleasant social intercourse. Each child knows he is a good boy, but he thrives on being told that he is, and gains self-confidence through reassurance. While he has come a long way from his two-year-old helplessness, the child of three still needs constant support. Adults who love him are all-important to him; he is busily building up his sense of values by watching beloved grown-up faces.

The three-year-old is interested in many varieties of play material. He can concentrate well on easel painting, which he greatly enjoys; he loves clay modeling and finger painting; his play in the doll corner becomes quite elaborate and highly social. Block building grows steadily more precise and realistic as time goes on from three to four. Toward the close of this age level block building has often become a major interest. Percussion instruments are enjoyed, and brief moments of group musical activity are pleasurable. Vigorous out-of-doors play includes tricycle riding; boxes and hollow blocks are hauled around to provide props for dramatic play. Playmates become more and more important as four-years-old approaches — here taken to be the upper limit of the “junior” nursery school.

TEACHING IN THE JUNIOR NURSERY SCHOOL

Once upon a time the very thought of being a teacher of twos and threes would have been considered laughable. Now it is something of a distinction to be selected for the youngest group. Personal maturity and intelligent insight are indispensable. With these little children, songs and games and stories are only very incidental to the important events in the day's procedure. Planning the playroom setup so that the group can get every possible enjoyment with the least avoidable friction, helping individual babies adjust to the school environment, developing the fundamental routines — these constitute the teacher's real task. Literature and music and art should be at her command, but the children in the junior nursery groups should merely be exposed to them and never subjected to formal instruction. Overstimulation is a real danger, and many times a talented teacher has actually to restrain herself from attempting to give the group too much. The teacher of these very young children will do well to study the role of the play therapist, for her own responsibility is to some extent the same; she must be permissive, supporting, confident in the child's own ability to grow in adequacy and social competence, and still constantly vigilant in assuring physical safety and providing an adequate play environment.

THE FOUR-YEAR-OLD

The average four-year-old who has had a happy start in life thoroughly enjoys group play and is beginning to develop real skill in managing social situations. He plays vigorously and planfully; his playmates are in general more important than his teacher and he learns rapidly from his associations. He is able to talk things over. He loves to play with sand and clay and finger paints; he enjoys working at an easel; his block building is serious and mostly meaningful, although he still likes to do piling stunts, such as trying

to make a building taller than himself, and so forth. Stories are enjoyed by the four-year-old group, provided they are well chosen. So is the music period. This group should be independent about taking out play materials, and cooperative in putting things away, although putting away often takes encouragement, and sometimes is accomplished only with the help of the teacher. Picture puzzles are fun — so is looking at a book by the four-year-old self. This age group is boisterous, and some grownups find it difficult to cope with. The teacher who likes to work with plastic materials, tell stories, and direct games and music may give herself much more scope than the teacher of the three-year-old group may properly allow herself. Four-year-olds enjoy gathering around the piano or a big chair. Provided there is no pressure about it, they love to sing, although the singing easily turns into a bellow; records are a treat, and rhythmic response to music is thoroughly appreciated. At four the child can stand more than he can at three-and-a-half; even so, since this is such an active and exuberant age, the teacher has to guard against overstimulation. Quiet periods are very necessary, and they require real skill to induce. The curriculum still should just be there available for use, rather than a series of planned activities through which the teacher puts the group. Plenty of chance for free, vigorous play should be provided, both indoors and out, and the wise adult, although alert and vigilant at all times, remains in the background so far as possible. Physical safety requires intent supervision with a minimum of interference; if the equipment is well chosen and in good condition there should be few mishaps in the four-year-old group and very little repeated warning.

While the four-year-old has grown to be less dependent on adults, he still needs an occasional pat or hug or both, and will often run up to a grownup and fling his arms around her. Responses on the adult's part should always be warm and friendly.

THE FIVE-YEAR-OLD

Normal five-year-olds are happy and cooperative, thoroughly enjoying life at home and in kindergarten. The five-year-old group is very teachable and generally enjoys learning. Many fives coax to be taught how to read and write. Activities in a group are thoroughly enjoyed, and five generally has immense respect for his kindergarten teacher. While all these things are true, the five-year-old group should not be subjected to much formal teaching. Only a year ago these children were four-year-olds. Nothing in the way of a magic change takes place because they have turned five and are now often classified as "kindergarten children." It is only too easy for the unimaginative adult to exploit the five-year-olds' eagerness to learn; it takes far less effort to conduct formal conversations with "building readiness-for-reading" in mind and to plan other teacher-directed activities than it does to provide a rich play environment, with a greater variety than that provided for the fours, and a greater incentive to try and to explore and to discover to the limit of five-year-old ability. Experimentation with materials should be encouraged; standards of achievement in painting or construction or any other activity should be a child's standards, not an adult's. Success in terms of usefulness of the product is a standard all can appreciate and accept — building a chair you can sit on, a doll's house you can play with, making a cowboy hat you can wear, building with floor blocks a house that doesn't fall down when it is played in — these are achievements of which five is justly proud. Aesthetic effects valued by adults are seldom honestly appreciated at this age. In this same vein it should be added that painting a picture you want to take home is also a satisfaction, and that pictures with which the child is himself satisfied rather than those which the teacher admires are valuable educative achievements. In short, the development of the *whole* child is a consideration just as important at five and six as it was at three and four. Especially in large groups

teachers are often tempted to do too much formal teaching, thus failing to provide well-rounded child experience. Where teacher-pupil relationships are warm and friendly, probably such procedure does no actual harm; but when opportunity for individual self-expression is limited by too much formal instruction, worth-while interests which might, if encouraged, persist throughout life, may well be discouraged and lost.

THE SIX-YEAR-OLD

From ancient times until now, changes appearing in the child's development as he approaches the age of six have never failed to impress thoughtful observers. As recently as ten years ago most persons would have been at a loss to describe the particular developmental traits of a two-, three-, or four-year-old, but would have described the six-year-old without hesitation as ready to begin to learn the three R's, no longer a baby but a school child.

Froebel, who for all his involved philosophy and complicated educational methods was a keen observer of children, said that at six or thereabouts the child passes from a symbolic stage in which his imagination is unbounded to a realistic one in which he is ready for books. From a radically different philosophical position, Sigmund Freud also taught that the five-and-a-half to six-year-old marks the end of a developmental era. The younger child, Freud said, is busy working out his basic personal relationships within the family. The need for accepting the fact that his parents have an affection for each other as well as for him, and in the majority of cases the additional need for tolerating the arrival of a sibling, arouse resentment, aggression, and profound guilt feelings. This emotional turmoil the egocentric nursery baby works through on a wholly unrealistic, imaginative basis in his fanciful play. Baby days also are made difficult by the need for learning to restrain free natural impulses in order to comply with social requirements; thoughtless or inept training methods, when employed, add to the more funda-

mental and unavoidable resentment at having to share affection.

According to the Freudian theory, by the age of five-and-a-half to six the child has ended this intense period of conflict and accepted both the family pattern and the restraints of convention upon biological satisfactions. True, the conflict is by no means entirely resolved; remnants of the Oedipus complex, as Freud called the family drama of childhood, are repressed and relegated to the unconscious. But the child himself enters upon a new period of comparative freedom from emotional stress which Freud called the latency period. The energy once consumed by infantile aggression and guilt feelings is redirected into curiosity and objective interest in the external world; the child is ready to derive his satisfactions through realistic rather than fantastic effort and has enough hold upon reality to settle down to books.

Thus Froebel and Freud on totally different premises urge that somewhere between five and six the child moves out from a world of fancy to a world of hard but interesting fact.

A contemporary statement of the same truth is made by Gesell and Ilg: "The six-year-old proves to be not a bigger and better five-year-old. He is a different child because he is a changing child."⁹

Like most radical changes, this one from babyhood to childhood, from fantasy to fact, is marked by behavior disturbance. Using the eruption of the six-year molars as a figure, Gesell and Ilg say of this transitional period, "New propensities are erupting: new impulses, new feelings, new actions are literally coming to the surface, because of profound developments in the underlying nervous system."¹⁰

It is this transitional six-year-old who typically comes to the door of the first grade. As a rule, he has looked forward to this moment; he wants to work and do hard things. But it is hard for him to inhibit motor activity, hard for him to

⁹ Gesell and Ilg, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

stick to a job, hard to choose if he is given the choice of many things to do. He is highly emotional; tears and tantrums are frequent. He wants to cooperate with his teacher and at the same time wants his own way. Enjoying the society of his classmates, he nevertheless argues and quarrels frequently. Living with this child is not easy, but the results of honest efforts to teach him and enduring patience with his shifts of mood are very rewarding. The wise teacher takes the first-grade child as he is, good or bad, sweet or horrid, adorable or cruel, and gives him consistently friendly guidance. Realizing how he loves praise and approval, she gives him all she honestly can, keeping criticism at a minimum and refraining from cross words whenever humanly possible. Success and a sense of achievement in tasks begun, whether reading or writing or construction, are important to pupils in all grades but perhaps most important in the first. A rigid program with little time for gross motor activity for the six-year-old is positively cruel. A rich and varied curriculum is of the greatest help to this eager, restless age not only in the child's school adjustment but also in his adjustments within the home.

In many progressive school systems reading-readiness programs and readiness tests precede the actual teaching of reading. These activities, as well as reading itself, are generally much enjoyed by the six-year-old. Expressional activities, such as painting and construction, continue to give pleasure, increasingly they reflect the child's growing range of experiences. If the spontaneity of such work is to be preserved, it is important for the teacher to restrain herself from imposing adult standards of excellence, even though it is equally as important to teach the child enough techniques to enable him to reach his own best standards.

THE SEVEN-YEAR-OLD

The second grade is described by most teachers as "easy." The initial adjustment to formal school work has been made;

many sevens read fairly well and enjoy reading by themselves. Gesell and Ilg find seven "responsive to his environment," sometimes concerned that the teacher or the group doesn't like him, very sensitive to group praise, possessed of an ethical sense "immature only because it is so recent."¹¹

Under the auspices of the Division of Studies and Publications of the Bank Street Schools a group of authors¹² has contributed a very significant study of 10 seven-year-olds attending the Little Red School House in New York City. The work was undertaken in the light of a basic educational philosophy which accentuates the importance of the specific environment in its influence upon child growth. While recognizing the value and importance of sequential studies such as those made by Gesell and Ilg, it is the belief of these authors that

we need more sequential¹³ studies which are as careful in their description of conditions and influences as they are of response and behavior within the situation. . . . Our approach has more in common with the problems and methods of ecology, or regional studies, or topological psychology, than it has with the approach which led to the development of intelligence scales on the basis of age norms.¹⁴

The detail of this study, its generous amount of data concerning the individual children and the classroom procedure, makes it a valuable document. Its careful reading is recommended to all teachers of young children. The way in which these second-grade pupils reflect their urban environment is both readily apparent and very interesting; as far as the general characteristics of seven-year-oldness are concerned, the picture given by the Bank Street study is not essentially different from that offered by Gesell and Ilg. Seven is highly

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Barbara Biber, Lois Murphy, Louise Woodcock, and Irma S. Black, *Child Life in School*.

¹³ That is, studies through which growth gradients are determined.

¹⁴ Biber, *et al.*, *op. cit.*

active — quoting the Bank Street study, “vigorous, intense, expressive in physical behavior.” “Makes a characteristic ‘explosive’ transition from schoolroom to playground,” according to Gesell and Ilg. His thinking is “gradually evolving from particular to general, from concrete to abstract, from absolute to relative as experience broadens from personal to impersonal, from direct to vicarious, from here and now to distant and long ago,” according to the records of the children in the Little Red School House. “His mental life is embracing the community and also the cosmos,” according to Gesell and Ilg. He is trying hard to establish “equilibrium to the adult world.” He meets strangers much more easily and pleasantly than he did at six and takes responsibility seriously. The Bank Street study found the boys and girls forming separate groups; a tendency in this direction is noted by Gesell and Ilg. Certain social and emotional characteristics apparent among the Bank Street children were not noted in sequential studies, though one would have expected them here also. But both records show the seven-year-old to be essentially amenable, sociable, interested in what the school has to offer. Both bear out the impression that at seven the child is well on in the latency period and on his way to what one psychologist has called “the maturity of childhood.” This does not mean that he is an angel, that he doesn’t quarrel, alibi occasionally, and experience occasional emotional upsets.

THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD

“Eight years old, going on nine” as one child persistently describes herself, is enthusiastic, vigorous, competent, and expansive. When well adjusted, he wants to be good even if he is not always able to meet his own best standards. Generally he likes to go to school, takes school responsibilities seriously, understands that he has certain obligations as a member of a group. Boys play with boys and girls with girls. “Real” friends begin to play a part in life; action is the key

characteristic of the child's play — action and sociability, for eights do not want to play alone. Eight has many interests; especially, if he is a good reader, he pores over books of travel and geography. A well-trained, well-informed teacher with good ideas and good leadership is much appreciated by the eight-year-old. Emotionally he is less dependent on teacher's support than formerly. She figures more as a beneficent potentate and regulator. To a considerable degree he and his schoolmates are beginning to furnish some of their own discipline — all of which is not intended to imply that eight can get on without adult-imposed discipline, nor that he can be relied upon to show up at the dinner table with clean hands. But he is now ready for the tenth year, which marks the fullest development of the vigorous traits of middle childhood. Soon he will be pubescent, then adolescent — a baby adult — and renew the conflicts of early childhood, but this time he will perhaps ring many more changes and pull out all the stops. Fortunately these difficulties concern the teacher of early childhood years only in remote anticipation.

SUMMARY

These brief and cursory notes on the child's development from two to nine have been offered merely to lend substance to the following general statements.

1. This is a period of rapid and startling changes. The school and the teacher will succeed best when these changes are anticipated and the necessary adaptations of method and curriculum made for them.

2. The nature, extent, and degree of these changes is far better known now than it was ten years ago, because of the valuable research studies which have been made. However, norms are by no means sacred. They do not hold as absolute standards for individuals and in the light of new research they may be subject to change without notice. Norms at best are only valuable frames of reference.

3. The intelligent and competent teacher will set herself to discover what are reasonable expectations for child adjustment to social requirements at successive age levels.

4. Intelligent guidance will be based on such expectations, with due consideration for wide individual differences in intelligence and home environment and due regard for temporary home factors which for a time influence school adjustment.

5. The conscientious teacher with fine professional outlook will set herself to prevent frustrations, to keep the child as far as possible free from attitudes and behavior patterns which will hamper him in later life — in fact, to assist the natural processes of growth in every aspect of the child's adjustment.

The modern school, in its administration, curriculum, plant facilities, and community relationships, will be guided by the determination to make constructive and intelligent accommodations to immaturity rather than to enforce mechanized discipline or promote undirected self-expression. "Our choices," writes Dr. Jersild, "at any age growth will be wisest if they are in keeping with the child's capacities and potentialities at that level and the forms of behavior dominant at that particular period of life."¹⁵

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. From what you have heard about nursery schools and what you know about children, at what age would you care to enroll a child in such a school? Would your answer differ as between a two- or three-hour session and an all-day session?
2. What would you want to know about the director and assistant teachers working in a school to which you contemplated sending your three-year-old child?
3. Nursery school teachers, especially at the junior levels,

¹⁵ Arthur T. Jersild, *Child Development and the Curriculum*, p. 9.

spend as much time as they can in quietly observing the children. Is this what an untrained visitor expects of teachers? How would you explain it to the visitor?

4. Only about 10 of Miss Smith's 15 four-year-olds gather around the piano for music. The others go on with their play. Why is this so, and should Miss Smith try to change matters?
5. On her equipment list, Miss Jones lists three tricycles for her group of 12 three-year-olds. She would prefer to order even more, but is deterred by the expense. Is this attitude sound educationally, or should she try to teach the children to share by having only one tricycle?
6. Mothers of kindergarten children expect these children to bring home something they have made, practically every school day. Is this expectation good for five-year-olds, from what you know of them?
7. A first-grade teacher says that she lets her pupils do what they want as much of the time as possible, because they are such a *young* group. Do you think this is a sound attitude, or do you wish to qualify her statement?
8. Should an intelligent six-year-old be coerced to learn to read when he shows no interest? An equally intelligent eight-year-old? Explain your position in the matter.
9. A seven-year-old in your second grade is quarrelsome, disinterested in his school work, cries easily. Is this normal seven-year-old behavior? In order to understand this child, what would you wish to find out about his past experiences and his present home environment?
10. Explain the advantages of workbenches and carpentry tools as part of the school environment of eight-year-olds.

CHAPTER IV

Establishing Routines in Early School Years

... it is insight, not formulas or technics or ready-made methods, that makes for the successful training of children.

RUTH WENDELL WASHBURN ¹

The word "routine" means different things to different persons. To some it has a very unpleasant sound, implying an impersonal, mechanical method of forcing children or adults to do more or less unpleasant things without thinking about them. To others, routinizing many of the activities of life appeals as an efficient, technological expedient, engaged in for the purpose of getting things done efficiently, without wasting time on considering the rights or the feelings of the individuals doing them. Neither of those connotations is acceptable to the sensitive and intelligent teacher. Perhaps for purposes of educational theory a new word should be found, but for the moment the concept of routine in an enlightened theory of child development connotes a matter-of-fact, unemotionalized way of getting essential tasks done with a minimum of friction or frustration for the child him-

¹ Ruth Wendell Washburn, *Children Have Their Reasons*, p. xi.

self. The routine is established first of all for the child's security and comfort and secondarily for the security and comfort of the adult, so that this adult may have energy and thought conserved for helping the child cope with more complicated problems. There is nothing mechanical about establishing routines in the lower school, if by mechanical is meant an unfeeling attitude, unmindful of the child's integrity as a person in his own right. In modern education a routine is never to be considered an end in itself; it is merely a means to an end, and that end is the child's growth as a self-directing individual.

The teacher of the youngest nursery school children, and to some extent the teacher of four- and five-year-olds, is concerned with the fundamental routines required for satisfactory biological adaptation. Well-adjusted kindergarten and first-grade children are self-directing with respect to these basic requirements. In their *Curriculum Guides for Teachers of Children from Two to Six Years of Age* the authors' records of situations in which teachers directed the routine experiences of children from two to five are introduced by the following clear-cut general statement:

Eating, sleeping, washing, dressing, undressing, and toileting are necessary routines for which the child should gradually assume responsibility if he is to be an independent person.

When there is no undue stress or emphasis on details, and when experimentation is allowed within the routine situation, children learn to accept these processes with a matter-of-fact attitude. This is dependent upon a program in which the responsibilities expected are appropriate to the individual child's maturity. For example, toileting is a complicated process for the young child. Expecting him to manipulate back or side buttons, or lace shoes, before fine muscles are ready to function, may develop a feeling of resistance to routines. Demanding concentrated attention when the child is fatigued defeats *the purpose of helping him feel equal to meet the situation*. To prevent a child's becoming tired or thwarted adults should assist in the routine performances. If the teacher takes over part of the job but allows the child to assume responsibility when he may gain satisfaction in achieve-

ment, she can keep alive his interest and the next time the situation arises he will be willing to attack it.²

Since the prime reason for establishing routines is to help the child experience the satisfactions of independence, what the teacher does in any given instance should be directed toward helping him feel equal to the situation. Sometimes, as appears in the paragraph just quoted, it is necessary for the adult to help the child by doing part of the work for him; sometimes he will gain the greatest satisfaction from performing the whole task himself.

*Curriculum Guides*³ contains a 60-page section devoted to routine experiences, giving stenographic records of actual teaching situations in two-, three-, and four-year-old groups. Each record is followed by an analysis dealing with the situation which started the experience, teacher guidance to strengthen learning, and comments on the technique used. The following experience is an excellent illustration of effective guidance at the two-and-a-half-year-old level.⁴

PUTTING ON WRAPS TWO-YEAR-OLDS

Child participating: D., 2 years 6 months.

T.: (*Quietly*) D., it's time to put on your snow suit

D.: I can't put it on.

T.: (*Pleasantly*) You could try. (T. puts snow suit flat on the floor.) You could sit down and put both feet in.

D.: (Sat down and put his feet in and pulled half heartedly on the suit.)

T.: Can you find your shoes? You could pull until you see your shoes.

D.: (Immediately became interested and pulled each leg promptly.) There it is! I see it! (Shoe).

² Ruth Andrus and Associates, *Curriculum Guides for Teachers of Children from Two to Six Years of Age*, p. 147. Italics the author's.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

T.: (then showed D. how to put one arm in and then the other.)
(The next day D. put his suit on the floor. T. checked to be sure
suit was ready to get into.)

D.: I can find my shoes today. (D. pulled on his suit.)

From this record it is first of all apparent that the teacher understood both the psychology of typical two-and-a-half-year-olds and the personality of this particular baby. It will be recalled that two-and-a-half is typically a negativistic age. "No! No!" is the usual slogan. When the hero of this incident responded with "I can't put it on" the teacher did not make the mistake of starting an argument by saying "Oh yes you can!" Instead she said positively, "You could try." Evidently she was able to gauge the youngster's ability correctly; she knew that given the proper conditions he was capable of putting the snow suit on and getting satisfaction from the performance. Teacher guidance and child learning in this situation are described in the following passages: ⁵

Teacher was matter-of-fact and pleasant in her announcement, "It's time to put on your snow suit," taking for granted that he would put it on.

When Dick said, "I can't put it on" the teacher did not argue or force the issue but said "You could try," at the same time starting the first part of the process for him, putting the suit in front of him. D. learned that effort or trying was considered worthwhile by the teacher.

Teacher then pointed out the next step in the process, which was simple and easy for the child. "You could sit down and put both feet in!"

When D. showed that he could do this much but did not go on to pull on the suit, the teacher gave an interesting reason, saying, "Can you find your shoes? You could pull until you see your shoes." By saying, "You could pull" she gave him the cue to the method he needed.

D. showed by his exclamation, "There it is! I see it!" that he had enjoyed finding the shoes and knew he himself had accomplished that part of the process.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 202.

The teacher continued to help D. put his arms into the suit so that the whole process . . . was successfully accomplished in a short time with D. helping as much as he could.

D. showed that he had learned he could try and was willing to do so by putting on the suit.

The teacher continued to help him. . . so that the whole process was complete and satisfactory to D.

The adult in this learning incident helped the child get started, and encouraged him step by step. As the authors of *Curriculum Guides* state, "The young child can cope with one step at a time when the whole process will be too much for him." She forestalled a negative reaction by substituting a positive one, "You could try." Throughout the process this child was helped to save face by doing all that he could in spite of his initial announcement that he could not do what was asked of him. This is perhaps the most subtle and at the same time most important part of good technique in dealing with the "No-no" age.

Harriet Johnson relates an instance in which a two-year-old showed resistance to stopping his play and washing for lunch. By approaching him with the question: "Do you want to walk into the bathroom on your feet or on your hands?" and by actually trundling him in, he walking on his hands and she pushing his feet, the job was done to the accompaniment of squeals of joy. Neither in the instance quoted at length from Andrus nor in that cited by Miss Johnson did the adult lose sight of her aim — to carry out the routine in question. At the same time neither teacher lost her sense of values: the routine was not in either case an end in itself. It was a means to accomplish a task satisfactorily in the interest of the child himself. In both cases the child was approached as a self-directing person — "You could try." "Do you want to walk in on your feet or on your hands?"

Both the more detailed account of a teaching situation from *Curriculum Guides* and the humorous incident told by Miss Johnson illustrate another most important principle deter-

mining teaching method: the adult must have what she intends to teach clearly in mind, and must see to it that, with all due regard for the pupil's personality, she accomplishes her purpose. This principle applies in all learning and teaching situations. Concerning the development of routines the authors of *Curriculum Guides* write, "In the realm of routines the child is expected to accept the plan which the adult has established for him, but as he becomes increasingly capable in his control of situations and behavior, there are times when he may be expected to make decisions."⁶ The competent teacher has the emotional characteristics and welfare of the children continually in mind as she guides them in the establishment of satisfactory routines. A good example of this at an older age level — four years and ten months — appears in the following record from *Curriculum Guides*. It will be recalled that four is a boisterous age — Gesell and Ilg described it as a "growthsome age." B., with two months still to go before she would be five, provides several realistic shots of "growthsome," boisterous four years and thereabouts in this record:

B. ran in from playground when T. called from door. She was laughing loudly and looking back at C. with whom she had been playing boisterously. She was warm, breathless, and excited. She ran to her locker, snatched off her tam, stuffed it into the top of her locker and darted across the room to laugh wildly at C. who came to tap at the window screen.

T. had chair in center of room in front of B's locker. T. took B. by the shoulders and guided her across room in front of her locker. B. kicked over a stool and laughed loudly.

T. picked her up, set her on her lap, said nothing, then smiled quietly at B., and gently pushed her damp hair out of her face and said, "Goodness, your hair is all curly, you've perspired so much today." . . . Unbuttoned two buttons of B.'s leather jacket. T. said "You're all right now?" Put B. down on floor. "You need a handkerchief first."

B. ran across room . . . took a paper handkerchief from a box

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

near the window, wiped her nose, crossed room to throw tissue into waste paper basket near her locker. . . .

Later, A.L. came in, sat down on stool in front of her locker, and said, "I wanted to come in anyway."

B. asked, "Why?" and walked several steps away from her locker.

A.L. replied, "I'm tired of running from C."

T. sat on chair in middle of cloakroom and said, "B., you can sit down." B. did and started to take off her leggings. B. got leggings off, and one leg inside out, attempted to hang them up. They fell and she stamped her foot. T. looked at her and said quietly: "I think you can hang them up better than that. See, part of them is inside out."

B. said "Yes," and took leggings out of locker, fumbled with one leg and asked, "How do you do it?" T. watched and said nothing. In an instant B. said, "I see now." Turned leg right side out and hung them up.

Later, A.L. remarked, "I'm a big girl. I'm four and a half."

B., "I'm four and a half too." Has unlaced shoes and is putting on slippers.

T. went to door to call C. to come in. T. came back to B., who was standing up pulling off sweater. T. helped her get it over one arm and she finished.

B., "When's C. coming in?"

T., "When C. comes in, you'll be upstairs."

B., "Why?"

T., "Because you're so quick. Please tell Miss G. I'll be upstairs soon." T. smiled at B. as she went out of cloakroom door.⁷

In this instance the teacher helped B. to get ready for rest efficiently after boisterous outdoor play, and saw her off to bed, calmed down and pleased by being told she was "so quick." The important points in the technique were: (1) The adult took hold of the situation, guiding B. firmly to her locker. (2) She then identified herself with the child, picking her up, pushing the hair out of her eyes, and remarking, "Goodness, your hair is all curly, you have perspired so much today." (3) The teacher helped B. over the first steps in the

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 156ff.

undressing process, by unbuttoning the top buttons of her leather jacket. (4) She stayed by B. during the undressing process, expressing her confidence in B.'s ability, "I think you can hang them up better than that," but ignored the request for help in turning leggings right side out, because B. gave evidence of being competent to solve the problem herself. (5) She maintained a friendly and helpful relationship with B., skillfully turning the child's attention away from play to the purpose of getting upstairs. ("When C. comes in, you'll be upstairs.") (6) She finally sent the child upstairs with a feeling that she was successful, and gave her a commission to perform: "You're so quick. Please tell Miss G. I'll be upstairs soon."

The whole record ends with the comment:

"It is the teacher's aim to allow each child as much independence as is consistent with completing the routine satisfactorily; to hold him to the standard of achievement of which he is capable and to direct teaching toward the few particular parts of the process which he has not yet completely mastered."⁸

Talkative, noisy four-and-ten-months needs little actual help in undressing, but does need directions and suggestions to keep him to the routine business at hand. Successful carrying out of the routine performance produces a green light to go on to the next activity; four-and-ten-months loves to go on, and soon learns that routine is a means to this end.

The teacher's responsibilities for establishing routines at higher age levels, five and six and seven and eight, vary according to the previous experiences of the children. Five-year-old kindergarten children, promoted from two or three years' good nursery school experience, should have well-established routines of eating, sleeping, and toileting. Children who have been trained well at home also come with a good start, but among this group there will be some who will relapse in their well-established habits because they are

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

unaccustomed to a group situation. These kindergartners require reassurance from the teacher, and intelligent guidance in living through an uncomfortable readjustment period. Sometimes the retrogression shows more in the child's behavior at home: he doesn't get to sleep, he won't eat his breakfast, he dawdles, or fusses and weeps when dressing and undressing; sometimes enuresis develops. It is most important for the kindergarten teacher to be aware of this, and to cooperate with the home in every respect while trying to give the child increasing security in the school situation. In other cases the maladjustment is more apparent at school; the child refuses to use the lavatory, perhaps he has "accidents"; he can't get his wraps on — or off. Milk lunch or midday meal with the group is left untouched. Here, too, cooperation with the home is important. The parents need to exert extra effort to make the child feel important and "big," and above all loved, at home. Conversations about school should usually be avoided unless the child initiates them. If things haven't gone too well, it is the height of tactlessness to inquire, "Were you a big boy in school today?" Or worse, "Did you cry in school today?" In a good modern school, the relations between parents and teachers is such that experiences may be shared and suggestions exchanged in the course of making wise plans for child guidance.

The kindergarten teacher has to deal with still another percentage of five-year-olds who have been spoiled, either through too much attention or through neglect. In these cases cooperation with the home is usually more difficult, and the children generally are more unhappy. Since routines have not been well established, three- and four-year-old and sometimes more elementary habits have to be acquired. The general principles of guidance, however, are the same: the teacher's purpose is to make the child as secure as possible in school, and help him over the bumps until he makes a satisfactory adjustment. Even though relations are not as excellent as one might wish, home cooperation is important and

the teacher, reinforced by the school office, must work for this. In dealing with the child, two important points to remember are: (1) This child, (we assume in this instance a normal child) is physically five years or five-and-a-half years old, therefore he has the neurological maturity needed to adapt himself to the requirements for his age level. He *can* function like a well-trained five-year-old, so far as his native capacities are concerned. (2) On the other hand, five years of poor training or lack of training must necessarily have done considerable damage emotionally, and this damage in most of these cases makes retraining difficult for the adult and very painful for the child. All the reassurance and affection the teacher can honestly give him are needed while she works firmly and steadily to straighten him out, in general using the same methods she would use with two and three and four, but adapting these to his higher mental development.

In the reeducation of the older child with reference to the fundamental routines, motivation is all-important. The child must want to help himself. The ideal motivation is a healthy desire to grow up, a desire hardly to be separated from love of social approval. Five-year-olds generally want their teacher's approval very much indeed, and at this age level it is legitimate to use the motive of teacher approval to the fullest extent, so long as it is used positively. That is, disapproval should be absent, while positive approval must be honest and apportioned to the degree of effort the child exerts. The principle of "saving face" is fundamental, as is the unshakable confidence that the child himself cannot lose the teacher's friendship, even though he does not always win praise for specific actions. This is a counsel of perfection, of course, and very difficult to carry out in some cases. But the greater the security the youngster derives from the personal relationship with his teacher, the harder he will try and the faster he will succeed in achieving a happy, efficient adjustment. Above all it is imperative that the teacher have confidence in the child's ability to help himself.

The approval of the group is a powerful incentive for most five-year-olds, and as such it has a double edge, for fives can be quite cruel to a playmate who does not reach their standards of maturity. Sensitive children need a measure of protection from group disapproval. On the positive side, an important task in the guidance of the kindergarten child's social development is to teach him to see good things about his associates and comment upon these rather than exclusively upon failures. As she works with the individual child's difficulties the teacher also works on educating the group so that it becomes a helpful social milieu.

The teacher of six-year-olds in the natural course of events has only occasional problems in connection with the basic routines; but these occasional difficulties do arise in the development of normal children. A bad start at home, an unhappy experience in kindergarten, the excitement of going to "real school," may account for temporary regressions. These require the same intelligent and patient treatment suitable for the youngest children, with the difference of mental maturity modifying the methods used. The older the child the more the adult can talk with him and help him to help himself. The first-grade teacher need not assume that numerous requests to leave the room imply that the classroom activities are boring or distasteful or that the children are trying to "put something over." Frequently these requests represent real needs, created by excitement and inner tensions. No restriction should be put upon the room-leaving activity except in special cases, and in such cases very gradually and with intelligent care.

Seven- and eight-year-old children are on the whole so firmly established in their basic habits that ordinary jolts and jars should not result in regressions or other behavior problems. Very severe shock and worry — difficulties between parents, the breaking up of the home through any cause whatsoever, a traumatic experience such as witnessing a shocking accident or losing a beloved relative through death, to mention possible examples — may temporarily upset the

best balanced of children. When such serious emergencies arise in classroom practice, the teacher should first of all set herself to support the child, with every confidence in the child's ability to help himself and her own competence to help him do so. She should also seek advice from the school guidance department as psychiatric assistance may be needed to strengthen her own work with her pupil.

The daily program of the nursery school and the routines with which the teachers of the youngest children are chiefly concerned are determined by the requirements of physical well-being and emotional health. Practically all programs for little children are influenced by weather conditions; no sensible nursery school teacher, for example, would deprive the group of playing outdoors in precious winter sunshine just to live up to a timetable which called for music at 11 A.M. Nursery school programs are highly flexible in all respects *except* those relating to food and sleep and toileting; all other routines are subordinated to these fundamental ones. It is certainly not intended here to imply that as children progress in school basic routines are unimportant; however, once these are well established they need concern the school less and less as objectives to be attained. And new factors enter in to alter the daily program. The wider interests and more varied activities of the older child require careful planning if he is to have a balanced educational experience, and the management of a planned program requires the establishment of a variety of routines in the classroom. "The ideal in routine is to have things done in the simplest, quickest, and most sensible way, without friction and waste of time or energy."⁹ To a certain extent five-year-olds and very decidedly six-year-olds enjoy the satisfaction of putting through a routine activity efficiently and smoothly. The carrying out of health and safety regulations must be routinized; fire, accident, sudden illness are far greater hazards where pupils are not

⁹ John A. Hockett and E. M. Jacobsen, *Modern Practices in the Elementary School*, p. 36.

trained to respond automatically to regulation procedures. A definite, routinized procedure for taking attendance is the general rule in public school classes. In addition to these, to quote Hockett and Jacobsen,

There is also a place . . . for definite procedures in order to save time and confusion in securing, using, and disposing of books and materials of all kinds; in sharpening pencils, in leaving and re-entering the room, both individually and in groups; in disposing of wraps, in caring for pets, and, in the lower grades, in conducting the midmorning lunch.¹⁰

The successful teacher plans carefully in her own mind the activities which she will reduce to routine procedures; she then sets about establishing these efficiently and well. When they are put through half heartedly, they fail of their purpose and children become listless and indifferent. "Snap" is an indispensable requirement for a routine activity, whether this activity be getting ready to go home, responding to a fire signal, or conducting an arithmetic drill. Through well-conducted routines, to quote Hockett and Jacobsen once more, children ". . . learn that regimentation of life's necessary, if sometimes less interesting, activities prevents loss of time and effort, saving these for more interesting projects."¹¹

One of the essential qualities of the newer school programs is that they are arranged to avoid breaking up the continuity of children's effort and activity. Formerly it was thought that numerous isolated periods, providing frequent changes of occupation punctuated by relief exercises, represented the best way of arranging the day in the lower school. Now our thought is that reading periods ending with "Put away your readers: take out your geographies," when an arbitrary twenty-five minutes have passed, are hardly conducive to good study habits; nor is it now considered sensible to interject physical-training stunts. Present efforts are directed to-

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

ward preventing strain rather than relieving it. Therefore, in many modern schools periods of fifty minutes or more are set aside during which pupils work freely on self-chosen projects, either more or less closely related to the units of work undertaken by the class as a group or purely independent undertakings. Children are able to work without fatigue for an appreciable length of time at tasks which really interest them and which require a variety of activity rather than just reading. Generously long periods for independent work are made possible when necessary tasks recurring daily or almost daily are expedited by good routines; well-trained children in the primary school soon learn that this is so, and their cooperation is heightened by their understanding.

The programming of the school day as the child progresses from nursery school to kindergarten and the primary grades reflects changing emphases in the school's activities. The child from two to four-and-a-half or five when enrolled in nursery school is enrolled for the following main educational purposes: to give him a chance to go through the ordinary activities of a toddler's day in the society of other children and under trained supervision; to provide a suitable play environment for persons of his age; to reduce to the least possible the frets and jars and emotional upsets which come in the course of adjusting him to a home situation planned for adults and older children as well as for him; to give him a chance to gain increasing control of himself in a physical and social environment which is simple enough for him to enjoy and understand. Of curriculum pressure there is none; the nursery school is simply a place where the nursery baby carries on his legitimate although entirely extracurricular business under the best possible conditions.

THE NURSERY SCHOOL'S DAILY TIME SCHEDULE

Since the child's chief concern at the nursery age is to develop the basic routines successfully and happily, one-

third to one-half of the nursery school day (at a conservative estimate) is taken up with eating, sleeping, dressing and undressing, and bathroom activities; with taking cod-liver oil and orange juice; with the children sunning themselves and generally vegetating. Some nursery school programs cover the child's whole day; others are arranged for briefer sessions. Eight- and ten-hour schools are usually conducted in day nurseries; the so-called "all-day" nursery school in research centers and private schools have sessions of six or seven hours.

A typical time schedule for an all-day school is the following:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| 8:45-9:30 | The children arrive, are inspected by the director or the school nurse, and then go to play, outdoors or indoors, according to the weather. ¹² |
| 9:30-10:00 | Wraps are removed, the children helping themselves as much as possible. They go to the bathroom, attending to the toilet and washing their hands. |
| 10:00-10:30 | Midmorning lunch — a very simple affair in the all-day school, followed by a brief rest on cots. |
| 10:30-11:15 | Play outdoors or in according to the weather. |
| 11:15-11:30 | Brief directed activity — music or stories or games — for those children who enjoy it. |
| 11:30-12:00 | The children wash for dinner and take a brief rest on cots. Often they remove their shoes and put on bedroom slippers, so that they may get ready for their afternoon rest with the least possible confusion. |

¹² A few years ago morning inspection by nurse or doctor was an important routine. The tendency today is to have the inspection informal but thorough, relying on the director and the teacher, who know the children well, to detect untoward symptoms.

- 12:00–12:45 Dinner. The children sit at tables with the nursery school teachers. Usually they are served by an adult, sometimes carrying their empty plates back to the pantry. The children are encouraged to eat in businesslike fashion, without too much dallying. Pleasant conversation is encouraged. No one is expected to remain at the table after finishing his meal. He goes at once to the bathroom and then undresses and settles down for a long afternoon nap.
- 1:00– 2:30
 or 3:00 Most of the children sleep. Those who wake in an hour may look at picture books or play quietly.
- 3:00 A glass of milk and quiet play until called for to go home.

Evidently there is little about this time schedule which differs from that of a well-ordered home, except that it is a schedule followed by a group of children rather than by one child, and the group situation usually makes the routines run more smoothly.

The two-hour to three-hour nursery-school timetable does not include the most important events of a baby's day — the noon meal and the afternoon nap, so this school has little opportunity to work directly on basic routines. However, by giving the child a happy playtime under good supervision his whole adjustment may be improved. This improvement appears in his better adjustment to routine requirements at home.

KINDERGARTEN TIME SCHEDULES

Programs for the four-year-old and five-year-old preschool groups — the age roughly corresponding to the kindergarten age — vary greatly in the flexibility of their procedure. In laboratory schools they differ very little from nursery school

schedules, merely including a little more provision for the routines of organized instruction. But in many public schools they are almost as rigidly controlled in their timetables as the primary grades.

The following schedule approximates usual kindergarten practice in more progressive public schools:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 9:00- 9:45 | A self-chosen activity period in which the child engages in his own work, frequently related to the unit of study then being carried on by the group. |
| 9:45-10:00 | A check-up period in which the children and the teacher discuss the accomplishments of the work period. The room is tidied and a recess period provided for. |
| 10:00-10:40 | A midmorning luncheon, carefully served, and a rest period. |
| 10:40-11:00 | Free play out of doors or a vigorous game indoors according to weather conditions. |
| 11:00-11:20 | Literature, or picture study, or natural science. |
| 11:20-11:50 | Music, rhythm, a quiet game. |
| 11:50-12:00 | Dismissal. |

Presumably the kindergarten child goes from school to a hot luncheon and a suitable afternoon rest at home,¹³ followed by wholesome play, outdoors or in. In a laboratory school and in an increasing number of private schools he has his hot luncheon and his afternoon rest at school, followed by outdoor play.

THE SCHOOL CHILD'S DAY IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

The entrance of the child into the first grade in many schools requires that a large percentage of his time be set aside for reading readiness activities, and frequently for ac-

¹³ When the child attends the afternoon session of a public school kindergarten, it is assumed that the home plans the morning with care.

tually learning to read. A survey made in 1926¹⁴ showed that at that time from 52 to 55.9 per cent of the school day in public school first grades was devoted to the Three R's, roughly 35 per cent to reading and phonetics. In formal situations where first-grade teachers are required to teach reading, it is safe to say that anywhere from one-third to one-half of the school day is devoted to reading and related activities at the present time. In progressive schools, however, where reading readiness activities rather than actual reading are the rule for the first school year, the estimate would be very different. In fact, an accurate estimate would be difficult to arrive at, since many activities leading to reading are incidental in an informal situation.

Where formal first-grade teaching is limited to reading, a program such as the following is typical:

9:00- 9:30	Self-chosen activity period, to include special projects in industrial or fine arts or, in some cases, individual work in reading or number.
9:30-10:00	Class problems; discussion of work, hygiene, news items, recess.
10:00-10:30	Midmorning lunch, rest.
10:30-11:20	Reading in at least two groups, the teacher dividing her time between them, the second group doing quiet seat work as she teaches the first, and vice versa.
11:20-11:40	Games, outdoors whenever possible.
11:40-12:00	Social studies, or elementary science, or nature study.
1:30- 2:15	Fine arts, or literature, or dramatization.
2:15- 2:40	Music: songs and rhythms.
2:40- 2:50	Recess.
2:50- 3:30	Reading as in morning session.

The long afternoon period devoted to literature and the beginnings of the fine arts is planned to afford the child lei-

¹⁴ C. H. Mann, *How Schools Use Their Time*.

sure for the enjoyment of these activities, and thus give him an incentive to do creative work.

Timetables in the second and third grades are developed on the same principle as in the first grade, except that the opening period in the morning often includes time for individual study and the leisurely afternoon periods are frequently curtailed to leave time for more drill.

The following is a typical second-grade program:

9:00- 9:25	Health inspection, class routine, planning.
9:25-10:25	Reading groups.
10:25-10:45	Recess, rest.
10:45-11:10	Reading groups.
11:10-11:40	Numbers and writing.
11:40-12:45	Noon.
12:45- 1:50	Reading groups.
1:50- 2:15	Lavatory, physical education.
2:15- 2:40	Language arts (spelling, practice in skills, evaluation).
2:40- 3:00	Music.
3:00- 3:25	Social studies, art, science, or free activities.
3:25- 3:30	Dismissal.

In the same school in which the above second-grade program was in use, the third-grade day would be apportioned in about the following manner:

9:00- 9:15	Health inspection, class routine, planning.
9:15-10:00	Reading groups.
10:00-10:15	Recess.
10:15-11:00	Reading groups.
11:00-11:20	Music.
11:20-11:40	Spelling.
11:40-11:45	Dismissal.
11:45-12:45	Noon.
12:45- 1:25	Arithmetic.
1:25- 2:10	Reading groups.

2:10- 2:35	Physical education, lavatory.
2:35- 2:50	Writing.
2:50- 3:25	Language arts, social studies, science, or art.
3:25- 3:30	Dismissal.

A study of these programs shows the following time allotments per subject daily:

Subject	Grade I minutes	Grade II minutes	Grade III minutes
Reading	150	150	120
Health *	60	50	40
Language arts, social studies, art, and science	70	70	70
Music	20	20	20
Numbers and writing	20	30	
Arithmetic	40
Writing and spelling	30
Dismissal	10	10	10

* Includes health inspection, physical education, recess, and rest.

When children are well trained and teachers competent, drills are enjoyable and routines go through without fuss or bother. If programs and time allotments such as those presented are flexible, opportunity may be found for creative work and for the development of group projects or units. It is easy to see, however, that where there is pressure to hold rigidly to time allotments a rich and varied activity program is difficult to assure.

Public school children six and seven years old usually go home for luncheon, or eat at school a luncheon brought from home. Sometimes the school provides or sells hot soup or cocoa; often it assumes no responsibility except the most casual noon hour supervision. An adequate afternoon rest is rare or unheard of. Yet in laboratory schools and progressive country day schools the hot noon meal is prepared and served at school, scientifically planned and carefully supervised: and in these schools an adequate rest on cots is the

general rule. From the standpoint of the welfare of the whole child there is little doubt as to which is the better plan. The usual public school arrangement involves haste, strain, and tension; in many cases it leads to poor dietary habits. It is a plan which can only excuse itself on the old theory that the school is concerned merely with the intellectual — or perhaps the intellectual and moral aspects of growth. This is highly inconsistent with a curriculum based on the known facts of child development. Such a curriculum calls for a program which will help maintain the fundamental routines at an optimum level as the child progresses through school, even though the establishment of these basic behavior patterns is the responsibility of the home and the nursery school.

SUMMARY

The establishment of good routines is one of the most important responsibilities of early education. The purpose of these routines always is to make the child himself a more effective person. The satisfactions attending achievement are indispensable for wholesome development. The successful teacher sets herself clear and definite goals in developing routines, keeps the child's stage of growth constantly in mind in dealing with him, does her best to assure him a measure of success at every step, and remembers that routines are means to important ends, not ends in themselves. The well-planned modern school provides a program and a time allotment at each age level which make it possible for pupils to acquire and maintain satisfactory routines for living and working with maximum efficiency and minimum friction.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is implied by the word "insight" in the quotation at the head of this chapter?
2. In the quotation from Gesell and Ilg, at the head of Chap. III, the authors speak of "a constructive accom-

modation to the limitations of immaturity" as proper educational procedure. How is such a procedure illustrated in the excerpts from *Curriculum Guides for Teachers of Children Two to Six*, given in this chapter?

3. How might the routine of putting toys away be motivated by the teacher of a four-year-old group?
4. Summarize the values derived from routinizing certain forms of behavior.
5. Make a list of teacher activities which the kindergarten teacher should reduce to routines.
6. What are some of the elements in teaching which you think should never be routinized?
7. List a number of school routines which you think should be well established and carried out independent of teacher suggestion by the end of the third-grade year.
8. Should simple social amenities, "please," "thank you," "excuse me," "Good morning, Miss Smith," be routinized? Would your answer differ with the age of the children under consideration?
9. Draw up a list of rules which you think would be helpful to a teacher who wished to develop good school routines in a first grade.
10. State briefly the function of routines in a freely organized primary grade in which every pupil is permitted the highest degree of initiative and independence consistent with the welfare of the group.

CHAPTER V

Housing and Equipping the School for Young Children

The planned structure, be it a dwelling, a factory, or a public building, is actually the outcome of the thinking and experience of individuals . . . representing every aspect of the community. Both the architect and the builder are guided by the research and experience of engineers of every classification . . . and lastly by the members of the community who will put the buildings to use.¹

The functional emphasis in our contemporary architecture is nowhere better shown than in the finest lower school buildings recently constructed or now under construction. This is especially true of structures designed to house preschool units. For the last ten years the problem of constructing buildings which would be functional with respect to the needs and activities of our youngest children has engaged the attention of leading architects, both here and abroad. Through the efforts of leaders in the nursery school field, the architect has become aware of the importance of the fun-

¹ Board of Education of the City of New York, *Curriculum and Materials*, Vol. I, No. 1, June, 1947.

damental routines in the preschool curriculum, and consequently preschool units are designed with particular emphasis upon adequate cooking, dining, resting, toileting, and storage facilities. The following excerpts from an article by Douglas Haskell in the *Architectural Record* for March, 1938, show the thoroughness with which the needs of little children have been studied in a field apparently so remote from early childhood education as the field of architecture.²

Small children cannot go far without supervision; they need frequent washing and toileting, always supervised. Many a handsome nursery building eats its head off in supervision costs because of misplaced hallways, stairs, cloakrooms, toilets. It is not enough simply to lower the fixtures!

. . . such actions as changing clothes, washing, or toileting are not mere preliminaries to the day's educational program, but *are* the education in themselves. . .

From the child's standpoint, what is desired is a complete, compact environment, free of outside disturbances, and small enough so that the small child to whom an ordinary room is already enormous is not lost in it.

From the teacher's standpoint, the central problem is minimal motion, the least possible carrying of children or things, and easy supervision.

The general public has been rather thoroughly educated to the effect that schoolrooms for little children should be spacious, sunny, adequately heated, well ventilated, and pleasing to the eye. It is for the specialist to plan details, and to improve upon them constantly; educator, architect, and builder work together upon this task. Needless to say budgets are a determining factor when it comes to materials, fixtures, pleasant luxuries for the nursery school staff, pleasant quarters in which visiting and waiting parents may observe their children at play, discuss developmental problems with the staff, or read books on child training. But there is now pretty general agreement upon minimum standards of health,

² Douglas Haskell, "The Modern Nursery School," pp. 85-100.

safety, efficiency, and fun as far as the children themselves are concerned. There are slight variations from community to community; the following descriptions are offered as indicative of general trends in the planning of playrooms, bathrooms, sleeping facilities, eating facilities, and outdoor play space.

THE SCHOOL SITE

The site of a school building for the use of young children is very important; too stringent economy in selection of property detracts from the advantages of having a structure which is itself functional and pleasing. An article in the *Forty-sixth Yearbook* of the National Society for the Study of Education suggests that "the qualities of the surroundings to be sought are . . . attractiveness, cleanliness, quiet, and safety." A quiet, shaded street in a residential section, with gardens or large yards, comes to mind at once. The article just quoted reminds us that "In the absence of clinical evidence to the contrary . . . we are morally bound to assume that young children, like their elders, are sensitive to beauty and ugliness, to order and squalor, and that they react accordingly." But a very important consideration in selecting a school site for the littlest pupils is accessibility. If bus service with its attendant expense and hazard is to be avoided, nursery schools should be within a block or two of the homes in which the clientele resides. Primary school children should not be farther away than a half a mile or so from their homes, unless school bus service is provided. Unfortunately the residential sections of our towns and cities are not all beautiful; ugliness and squalor frequently distinguish sections in which nursery schools, for instance, are most needed. Such conditions must be faced and met, and the school built upon the safest, least squalid spot. For children who walk to school, the question of safety requires careful consideration. Speedways, railroad tracks, busy corners not supervised by policemen must be avoided if at all possible. Probable changes in neighborhoods

should be thoroughly studied. "Our cities everywhere are embarrassed by the existence of school buildings situated in what were once residential neighborhoods but now largely deserted." Ideal selection requires that the site be regular in outline, with not much difference between length and width; the ground should be good ground, not swampy nor badly filled, nor inclusive of too much ledge rock requiring much blasting. The ground should be level with enough slope for satisfactory drainage. Turf is by far the best play surface for the greater part of the play area; to keep turf in even fairly presentable shape, it is necessary to have fertile soil with which to work. As the *Yearbook* article states, trees, plants, and shrubs have practical as well as aesthetic value.

THE BUILDING

The school building for the youngest pupils should not suggest institutionalism. As is aptly remarked in the *Yearbook*, "The school for young children is not a suitable vehicle for civic ostentation." With no scientific evidence to prove how important a consideration it is, we assert with conviction that the school building for small children should represent the least possible contrast with the home; it should be "informal, friendly, and familiar." With greater humility than our forebears have shown, we admit today that we cannot foretell what will prove to be the best sort of school building for the children of tomorrow; therefore it seems reasonable to build without too much extravagance and with the highest degree of adaptability to change.

Playrooms

Minimum play space per child is regulated by law. The New York State Education Department requires the following as a minimum: 35 square feet per child under five years of age; 25 square feet for children between five and seven. The best designed buildings provide space in excess of this minimum.

The playroom for little children is generally required to be at or above street level, and since most of this play is on the floor this part of the room must be given particular attention in planning. Playroom floors must be sanitary, that is, easily kept very clean, they must be warm, not too hard, and as far as possible sound-deadening. Heavy linoleum, rubber, and cork compositions are favored materials.

A general standard for proportion of window space to floor area is 1 to 4, although deeper rooms are favored by some authorities. When planning a playroom, the space taken up by various pieces of equipment must be given careful consideration so that ample open floor space will remain. In Haskell's article the following allotments are suggested:³ for 10 twos 325 square feet; for 12 threes 360 square feet; and for 15 fours or fives 400 square feet.

It should be kept in mind that in schools offering a full day session the playroom is actually the equivalent of a living room; for in several of the best schools the children play, dine, and rest in the same room. Granted that this is frequently the case for reasons of economy, concentration of activities in one room is considered by many persons to have distinct advantages for the very young child himself. To quote Haskell once more:

. . . Within the room the architect, in effect, establishes the child's environment for the day. The world of so small a child must not be too large, must not be too complex, must be compact, and in large part familiar. If overwhelmed with too many new impressions, the child masters none. This consideration has lead nursery heads to advocate that the child's play be confined to the single large room with a few dependent areas and very few necessary excursions.⁴

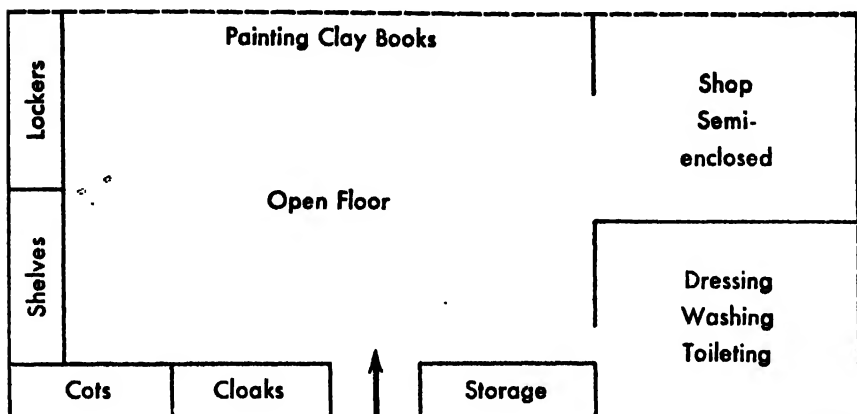
An approved arrangement of the playroom and its dependent areas appears in the accompanying diagram. Play

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

space arranged in this fashion makes for effective teacher supervision, and uses available sunlight in the best possible fashion.

The playroom should be provided with ample storage space of two main varieties: easily accessible space for materials and playthings to which the children are to help themselves, and storage space inaccessible from the child's point of view in which the teacher may store materials neatly and



efficiently. Reasonable neatness in a group playroom is not only aesthetically pleasing but also necessary for safety; it should be maintained at the cost of the least effort for the teacher and the fewest "don'ts" for the children, plus the least nagging about putting toys away. Children like the process of putting things away if receptacles are convenient, above all if the things put away fit in neatly without too much effort. Children above the two-year-old group enjoy individual "cubbies" in which to keep their personal possessions; a standard cubby is approximately 14 by 4 inches, with a depth of 10 inches. For children over three, a semi-enclosed shop in which hammers and nails may be enjoyed is desirable; by this means supervision of carpentry activities is facilitated, and the noise and confusion of the main playroom are reduced. The main room itself is usually divided into two main areas as in the diagram.

Bathrooms

Bathrooms for dressing, washing, and toileting are best placed adjacent to the playroom, to reduce confusion and make supervision easier. The New York State Education Department requirements include at least three toilet bowls and three hand basins for every 30 children. The toilet seats should be 10 to 11 inches from the floor, the washbowls approximately 24 inches. There should be no partitions for the age groups two to five. Hooks should be provided for towels and washcloths, in cases where disposable tissues are not the rule. Each child's hook must be identified by a picture or an emblem which he can himself recognize. The general trend today is to use disposable tissue, thus putting the danger of infection from exchanging cloths and towels at a minimum. But in cold weather nothing takes the place of a soft, clean towel, even though their care puts an additional responsibility upon the teacher. Soap dispensers are efficient and sanitary; individual small cakes of soap are both more fun and better educationally since they are what the child generally uses at home.

Clothing Lockers

Proper care of clothing necessitates individual lockers; no child's clothing should come in direct contact with his neighbor's. Lockers should be open for ventilation, easy supervision, and a reduction of minor mishaps. They should be attractive and invite neatness. Convenient dimensions are cabinets 50 inches high and 10 inches deep, partitioned into three sections: a 7-inch section for hats, a 28-inch section for hanging coats, and a 10-inch partition for shoes and rubbers. All clothing should be well marked; it is worth the director's time to impress this upon parents before the children enter school. Adequate clothing should be kept at school for any all-day session pupil, regardless of age, to allow for weather changes and accidents.

Sleeping Facilities

Adequate rest on comfortable cots should be assured for every child. Cots should have removable canvas; approved dimensions are, for children up to four years of age, 27 by 48 inches; for children of four to five years, 27 by 52 inches; for children of five to seven years, 27 by 54 inches. For proper rest, cots should be screened. Three paneled portable screens, 27 to 30 inches wide by 36 inches high, are practical and convenient; they should be light enough to move easily, and not so light that they fall at the slightest touch. Screens of this type are useful during other activities of the school's day.

Dining Facilities

As a general rule playroom tables serve as dining tables also. According to Haskell,⁵ 23 by 30 inches is a favorable size for individual use, and 23- by 48-inch tables combine well for group serving. Six children may be seated at a table. The tables should be attractively set and the children provided with spoons and forks of convenient size and weight. Dishes should be attractive also and not too indestructible. Children enjoy light, pretty china and soon learn to take care of it. A little breakage should be included in estimating the per capita cost of preschool education.

Food may be brought from the kitchen on restaurant trucks; in situations where the school is not provided with a special kitchen and food must come from a distance, steam tables should be used. Every effort should be made to have the food attractive to look at as well as satisfactory from the dietary standpoint.

Special Dining and Sleeping Facilities

The advantages for the very small child of carrying on most of the day's activities in one room have been suggested. These advantages are less important with increasing age;

⁵ *Ibid.*

special dining and sleeping rooms, shared by more than one group, become more desirable as children grow older. Many people think that a special sleeping room is much more important than a dining room and agree that such a room is good for even the very young groups, as long as there are not too many children in one room. A special sleeping room more readily suggests relaxation than a converted playroom; usually it is easier for the staff to arrange such a room so that it is orderly and well ventilated when the children enter it than it is to convert a play-and-dining room quickly into a resting room.

OUTDOOR PLAY SPACE

The New York State Education Department standards require 200 square feet of outdoor play space per child for all children under seven. This space should be varied. A part of it may be turf or the equivalent when possible, another part surfaced for games requiring the use of balls, hoops, and similar equipment. Ideally there should be a flagged or cement surface on which wagons and bicycles and other wheeled toys may be enjoyed. When space is shared by children of different age levels, it should be so partitioned that little children are not endangered by the vigorous play of older ones.

In planning outdoor play space, it is important to have in mind the proportion required for the placement and safe use of equipment. A junior jungle gym, for instance, requires a space 12 by 15 feet, a kindergarten slide needs 8 by 20 feet, and a sandbox 20 square feet per child, with a space of 3 feet around the box.

A paved and covered terrace between playrooms and outdoor play areas is very desirable; many days which are too rainy or muddy for playground activities permit play on the terrace. It is also much easier to keep the room floors clean and attractive if a terrace is traversed before muddy little feet reach the playroom.

Using the imagination and the knowledge which are the architect's and the interest in children's play which absorbs the teacher or nursery school director, it is a delightful exercise to plan ideal quarters for the school for little children. Actually, the rank and file of nursery schools are as far from ideal as is the average primary school, and teachers and directors must face practical realities and make the best of them. This is being done in many places, and often with signal success.

The roof playground is often the best available play space for younger children in urban areas, superior to a yard for the better air and less impeded sunshine available at an elevation above the city's streets. Among the limitations of roof playgrounds is the fact that variety of ground surface is hardly possible. Mats under all climbing equipment are essential, and because of the usually very hard surface all play with wagons and bicycles must be carefully supervised at all times. Not a square foot of space may be wasted in converting a city roof into a playground; partitioning is imperative when older and younger groups must share the facilities. Waterproofed storage space for toys and other movable equipment is important for both roof and yard playgrounds; it is unfortunate if the energy of nursery school teachers has to be wasted hauling play materials in and out of doors.

The building and equipment of a good lower school are in no sense replicas in miniature of those standardized through use for older boys and girls. On the contrary, "merely reducing the dimensions of the grade school or kindergarten equipment produces a caricature similar to the primitive painter's representation of children as dwarfed old men."⁶ As a matter of fact, those who plan new schools for children of primary-grade ages may well question whether a reverse process is not advisable; that is, whether schools for older children should not be modified in the light of what nursery school planning has demonstrated to be good. In the tradi-

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

tional school, even in fine modern buildings, school furniture and equipment as well as actual buildings have been standardized from the top down, like the traditional curriculum. Modern schools tend to build their courses of study from the bottom up. Perhaps the same tendency will soon be cultivated in designing the school plant. It is a fact that screwed-down desks for smaller children have been replaced by movable desks and tables in many places. But there are still ever so many screws to be taken out; there are still many primary classrooms where the activity curriculum is seriously hampered for lack of play space. Generous provision for shops and laboratories for younger children is quite rare, if the nursery school and kindergarten child needs his semi-enclosed shop, his not-so-much-older siblings will surely enjoy similar facilities.

However, it is necessary to add that many vital and interesting activities are nevertheless carried on in formal classrooms under the leadership of teachers with vision and ability. A movable teacher is far more important than movable furniture!

SPACE FOR ADULTS IN THE SCHOOL FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Adults as well as children are among the members of the community who use the lower school building. The administrative staff, as well as the teachers, require space for work and relaxation. Plans should include an office for the director, a pleasant, well-equipped office for the nurse and the visiting pediatrician, and an isolation room for children who develop symptoms of illness in the course of the day. The isolation room should be within sight of the playground if possible, and should be provided with a private lavatory. Nursery school teachers have a very strenuous working day; they should be provided with a comfortable room in which they may snatch a few minutes' rest and enjoy a smoke. A lavatory should be available for the teaching staff, and it should be kept distinctly for the staff's use; it should not, as

it sometimes does in practice, serve the isolation room as well.

MATERIALS FOR WORK AND PLAY

Good lists of materials for nursery, kindergarten, and lower grades are available from many sources. A few important principles of selection may be mentioned here with reference to the following varieties of equipment — climbing apparatus, wheeled toys, construction materials, toys and materials to encourage dramatic play, materials used to stimulate work in the plastic arts, musical instruments, books.

Certain general standards should be kept in mind in choosing equipment of any variety for use in the school for young children. The materials supplied should stimulate desirable activity on the part of the children; they should be durable, hygienic, reasonably safe for use with a minimum of adult direction, and well selected from the point of view of economy.

Climbing apparatus is needed both indoors and out, for there will be many rainy days when out-of-door play is impossible. A jungle gym, tower gym, climbing gym, or a variant of these should be chosen for use out of doors, and an equivalent bit of equipment should be available for use in the room. Selection of these should be based on the age and size of the children who are to play and climb. Spaces between rungs should be measured; there should be enough space to encourage reaching and stretching, not so much space that the children fall between. Boards and ladders of proportionate length and height may be used to supplement the gym. Weathering is an important consideration for the out-of-door equipment. Surfaces should be generously protected by frequent painting. Apparatus must be sunk or otherwise firmly fastened to its foundation. Indoor climbing apparatus must also be carefully set up and kept in safe and sanitary condition. Different age groups should share only the equipment adaptable to children of different sizes.

Hollow blocks and packing cases well painted for weathering and well inspected for splinters are good climbing equipment for the youngest children; trapeze rings, horizontal bars, climbing ropes are fine for older ones. The group using the equipment should have vigorous fun with it, and should be as free as possible from adult suggestions and safety directions.

Wheeled toys from the two-year-old's pull toys to the eight-year-old's bicycle should be generously provided. Doll carriages fascinate fours and fives, as do express wagons. It is important to have wheeled toys durable, and to show the children the wisdom of good rules for using them. A doll carriage in which one child pushes another child will not last long; it is for the director to decide how much breakage the school can afford in the interest of learning through experience rather than through precept. Wagon play is full of possibilities for cooperation and dramatization; wagons must be safe, and traffic rules may be developed profitably by three-and-a-half and four-year-olds.

The educational possibilities of play with good block building material are practically unlimited if the blocks are well chosen. The following standards for selection may be suggested: first, there should be considered what the children will gain just from manipulating the blocks, apart from any planned building. At the junior nursery school level the children enjoy pulling and hauling large blocks which are not too heavy for them. For this reason, as well as for their stimulus to climbing, sturdy hollow blocks are very desirable. Young children also like to pile blocks one on top of the other for the pleasure of tumbling them over. For this activity floor blocks of sufficient size to be easily handled and easily retrieved are good. Little children at times like to handle little blocks just because they are little. Blocks of the Froebelian gift size are good for this purpose. A second principle of selection concerns the buildings children like to make at different age levels. The plans and interests of the

junior nursery are very fleeting. The kinds of buildings they enjoy are few. Simple floor blocks serve well for making sidewalks, railroad tracks, and simple houses satisfying to two- and three-year-olds. Most very little children do not care for having their work preserved for any length of time, so that blocks with corner pieces or more elaborate devices for providing stability are not needed at this level. Two-year-olds are also content without much variety of shape, but by three-and-a-half blocks of differing shapes are used to construct really elaborate buildings.

Older preschool children and primary pupils desire permanence for their buildings. They also want a fairly finished product: a house they can get into, a wagon that can be pulled, a boat that can be used for some time as a center for dramatic play. For such children blocks like the Patty Hill floor blocks, with their sturdy corner pieces and supporting rods, are a delight. Still older children want more diversified building materials, with a yet greater feeling of permanency in the finished products.

In the selection of blocks economy is an important factor, for adequate block equipment requires a large expenditure. A number of practical questions should be answered before making a large outlay. For instance, are these blocks really important for the child at this age? Are his ideas such that he can use them fully as a play medium? Is the space in the room such that large building blocks can be used with profit without curtailing other desirable activities? Is it worthwhile to buy the blocks if completed buildings must be torn down at once because the block space must be put to other use? Is it perhaps more profitable to borrow building materials for large building products occasionally, as they are needed, rather than give them permanent house room?

Well-chosen educational equipment of any sort should lead to noticeable growth in planning and executing as it is used over a period of time. Well-selected blocks stimulate progress in building; poorly selected blocks, too

many blocks or too few, result in a dearth of ideas and in aimless manipulation amounting to "fooling." When children are ready to make buildings with stability and permanence, it is wasting their time to let them play with blocks with no variety of form and no provision for the carrying out of new ideas. When appropriate blocks cannot be provided because they are too expensive or there is no room for them, probably blocks should not be provided at all.

Dramatic play is natural to children, and normal, active individuals will engage in it no matter how poor their environment. Witness the elaborate dramatic play recalled in the memoirs of people who were growing up a hundred years ago, when children had few ready-made toys, but had to imagine or create their own. However, a wise provision of play materials greatly enriches this most important means of education. All the equipment so far mentioned in this chapter contributes to dramatic play of one sort or another. Climbing toys, wheel toys, and blocks, as well as other play materials now to be considered, are incentives to good dramatization if they are not so numerous and complete as to stultify the child's own active fancy.

In well-provided home playrooms and nurseries, the needs of children's dramatic play are met through a variety of toys. Dolls and doll furniture, railroad trains and toy villages, and all the fascinating wares of the toy shops are bought by delighted relatives and given to delighted children at Christmas and birthday times and other occasions. These attractive additions to the environment of the young have gradually found their way into the nursery school and the kindergarten, even into the primary grades. The principles of wise selection for school use are not very different from those which should guide intelligent people in buying toys to provide fun at home. For instance, a doll with simple, well-made clothing, which can be put on and taken off, washed and ironed, is preferable to a doll whose fashionable dress is sewed on, or so fragile that when removed once or twice

it is in shreds. A doll with a limited wardrobe, which suggests making additional clothes for her, has more educational possibilities than a doll with such a complete wardrobe that nothing else is needed. Similarly a mechanical toy, from an automobile that "runs by itself" to an elaborate electric railway, has no play possibilities for the child once he has seen it work a few times, except the possibility of taking it apart to see how it is made. A toy of this sort has a very limited use at home, and no use at all in school.

In purchasing varieties of toys for the school environment, economy, durability, and play possibilities should be carefully considered. Too many toys should not be provided; given an adequate budget to begin with, the teacher should see that the playroom is adequately stocked and not littered.

Plastic materials encouraging creative work form an important part of the modern school environment. In addition to directed work with crayons, paint, and clay, even the more formal schools are beginning to appreciate the wisdom of exposing children to different media for undirected expressional activities. Drawing paper cut in various sizes, newsprint, finger paints, powder paints, boxes of water color paints, easels, and paint brushes are commonly provided for use during free periods. Scissors, blunt for nursery school and pointed for older children, are recognized equipment; clay is provided and the children's spontaneous use of it encouraged. Access to a workbench for every child is the rule in more progressive schools, although not available in more conservative situations.

There is much to be said on both sides concerning the use of sharp tools in the classroom. Such tools teach control and careful handling, thus giving the child an acquaintance with danger which may prevent him from incurring accidental injuries. But the risk of serious injury in the process of this education is great; therefore sharp tools should never be used in the lower school except under supervision, and they should be removed at any time that the children ignore

safety restrictions. For this reason tools other than small hammers with nails to be hammered into cork or some other nonresisting material are of doubtful use in the nursery school, since it is a sound principle to avoid activities requiring constant direction and supervision. Two facts about young children need to be considered in making plans for the use of dangerous tools. On the one hand, children trained from their earliest years to be self-reliant, to use judgment and skill up to their capacity, can be counted upon to a surprising extent to manage themselves and avoid personal injury. On the other hand under unfortunate circumstances a very slight accident may lead to serious or even fatal consequences. We hope to develop in children the quality of intelligent caution rather than timidity; we want them to be self-reliant and capable. Too great caution on our part defeats this end, but carelessness may lead to disaster. Between the two extremes lies reasonable procedure, but what such reasonable procedure is depends upon the situation. The number of children in the group, their age, discipline, and previous experience, the degree of self-direction they enjoy at home, and the teacher's own alertness, poise, and rapidity of movement — all these must be taken into account in introducing sharp tools into the classroom environment.

Music should be a part of every school environment. A well-tuned piano should be available for every group in the lower school. In addition well-tuned bells, a xylophone, drum, cymbals, as well as such improvised musical toys as glasses of water containing various amounts of liquid, should be accessible to the children. The present practice of allowing even nursery school children to play softly on the piano is indicative of the present trend in musical education, to permit experimentation in this as well as in the plastic arts.

Books have been a recognized part of the school's environment since schools have existed. The modern school provides them in greater profusion and for more varied purposes than did the school of fifty years ago. Books are

not merely "to study out of"; they are there to be admired and enjoyed and handled and loved. Nowadays many of them are things of beauty, practically all are pleasing to look at and pleasant to handle. Books should be a part of the child's environment from the nursery school on; first picture books are his introduction, and by the time he leaves the third grade he is a fairly proficient reader, ready to use books for study and recreation, ready to learn the art of skimming as well as the ability to study. By this time, too, he should have developed a love of reading as a leisure time pursuit. With each year books become a more important part of the environment; pencils and attractive notebooks grow to be proud possessions. But books and pencils and ruled paper and notebooks are no more essential in themselves than toys or out-of-door play apparatus or a play house; they simply gain in relative importance as the child grows and is ready to enlarge his experience through literature and the language arts.

The modern lower school is planned to provide a normal environment for growing children. The ideal school environment provides a variety of incentive and opportunity for work and play; it avoids waste, the confusion of overabundance, and the danger of overstimulation. At its best it is an invitation to learning, challenging the child to advance in understanding and control both of himself and his environment, initiating worthy interests, and presenting varied opportunities for developing them. The well-planned school building and its equipment provide a setting for the activity curriculum.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare a modern school building serving kindergarten and primary grades with a city school built in 1885.
2. Is the expenditure of funds for purely aesthetic additions to a school structure justifiable?

3. Should school buildings be put up with a view to indefinite permanence?
4. Do the arguments for single-room accommodations for nursery school groups, such as the plan shown on p. 97, appear to you to be sound?

Part II

The Curriculum in Early Childhood Education

CHAPTER VI

The Curriculum in Early Childhood

I think that only slight acquaintance with the history of Education is needed to prove that educational reformers and innovators alone have felt the need for a philosophy of education. Those who adhered to the established system needed merely a few fine-sounding words to justify existing practices. The real work was done by habits which were so fixed as to be institutional. The lesson for progressive education is that it requires in an urgent degree, a degree more pressing than was incumbent upon former innovators, a philosophy of education based upon a philosophy of experience.

JOHN DEWEY ¹

Early childhood education was the first proving ground of "a philosophy of education based upon a philosophy of experience" in this country. This was partly due to what might be called fortunate coincidences, for John Dewey's discovery of Patty Hill's work in Louisville came about through the philosopher's acquaintance with Miss Anna Bryan, and Miss Hill's ability to grasp the experimentalist

¹ John Dewey, *Education and Experience*.

position was due at least in part to a personal philosophy developed in a rather unusual family, as well as to keen critical intelligence. The "radicals," as progressive kindergartners were called, started out fearlessly to develop methods by which children learned through their own actual experiences, and as time went on more and more attention was given to experiences which children seek out and enjoy and less and less to experiences set upon because they were supposed by adults to be proper and valuable for children. The child's own purposes became the pivot of kindergarten activities. The philosophy of experience was thus carried over into practice. While this radical experimentation caused a bitter controversy in the kindergarten group itself, at first it called forth little comment from educators in general. The kindergarten, it will be recalled, was rather aloof from the elementary school world; children did not learn the three R's in kindergarten, and therefore the curriculum as the average schoolman understood it was not threatened in any fashion. But to students of educational theory it soon became apparent that the philosophy of experience eventually must affect practice at all educational levels, since this philosophy was essentially the philosophy both of social democracy and modern science. A radical reorganization of curriculum and method, not only in the management of kindergarten babies but in the whole conduct of formal education as well, thus became imperative.

William H. Kilpatrick in his monograph, *The Project Method*, first set forth what such a reorganization entailed, and aptly described the unit of all education as *the purposeful act* of the pupil, in a social situation, under adequate guidance. In his book, *The Foundations of Method*, Dr. Kilpatrick worked out the close relation between the principles of the project method and the general trend of a psychology of learning based on the "stimulus-response" theory. When a child purposes to act, all his pertinent inner resources are marshaled and alert to carry out his purpose. To act upon his purposes is pleasing to him; to carry them through to a successful

conclusion brings him concrete satisfaction. The processes through which the child passes in carrying his act to conclusion are these: first, the original purposing; second, careful planning; third, the carrying out of his plan; last, the judgment of the results, which judgment often leads to a modification of original plans, a different form of execution, and a final result more satisfying to the child than the original effort.

Evidently a procedure like this, with all activity starting in the purposes of the children, demanded a fundamental change in the attitude of the teacher. She became, in the first place, a student of child purposes, and then a guide in the planning, executing, and judging of these purposes. Classroom organization must of necessity be flexible, for children require a high degree of individual freedom within the social group to carry out their plans. Discipline would result through the happy concentration of children upon their own pursuits rather than through arbitrary requirement.

Evidently, too, the content of the curriculum must change when the child's own purpose became the unit of the teaching process. Children's interests cannot be expected to follow exactly along the line of the old curriculum requirements. With regard to content, Dr. Kilpatrick distinguished four types of projects. One is the construction project, in the course of which the child makes something which he desires to have, either to help him in his dramatic play, or to give to someone, or to place in a school exhibit. Another is the drill project, in which the child purposes to reach a certain degree of skill in some performance — for instance, to write as well as the third-grade standard performance given on a writing scale, or to complete a practice test in arithmetic in a given time. A third is the problem project, in which the child purposes to find the solution of some problem which really interests him, either one which has arisen in connection with his work at school or one which has occurred to him in the course of his experience outside school. A fourth is the appreciation project, in which the children and the teacher together

purpose to enjoy some delightful experience, such as studying a picture or listening to a radio concert. These varied activities have in common their origin in the purpose or intention of the child or the group and the fact that activity on the child's part as well as on that of the teacher is taken as essential.

As the project method was extended beyond the kindergarten grades, the construction project became very popular. Young children delight in making things and doing things; they enjoy most a concrete, tangible result of their labors. The evaluation of construction projects was seen to be attended by great satisfaction; the standards of success were altogether concrete. If the child had made a stool, could he sit on it? If he modeled a dish out of clay, would it hold anything? If he cut and sewed a garment, did it fit? Could it be put on the person or the doll for which it was intended? Did it look like the sort of garment he intended it to be?

The suitability of these construction projects for the young child, and the fact that most project work was carried out in the lower grades, led to the mistaken assumption on the part of many that construction work was essential to the project method. Those who had not grasped the underlying theory, who failed to see project teaching in its true relation to "the continuous reconstruction of experience" and the laws of learning, jumped to the conclusion that the essentials of the project method were more moving about and more confusion in the classroom, regardless of how this activity was directed. A little more paste and a little less order, a little more activity and less achievement in the traditional subjects, unfortunately became associated with project teaching in the public mind. Such an interpretation is altogether foreign to the real theory of the project method. The essence of the project is child purposing: a child may purpose to read a book, or enjoy a story, or solve an abstract problem as naturally at certain stages of his development as the young child purposes to weave a hammock for her doll. Projects are not real projects

at all, and most assuredly are not educative, unless they do involve serious planning, careful execution, and intelligent evaluation of the work accomplished.

The difficulties and dangers inherent in the project method were not overlooked by those who first advocated its introduction into the schools. One of the most fundamental of these difficulties lay in the problem of selection. Children have many purposes, a large proportion of them transient. Who is to decide which of these many purposes shall be cultivated in the classroom, and by what standards should the selection be made? From the very beginning Dr. Kilpatrick and others interested in project teaching suggested certain ways in which teachers could make such decisions. Valuable projects should enlist the child's whole effort; they should enrich his store of meanings and increase his control over himself and his surroundings. The value of projects may also be determined in part by whether or not they generally lead on into other valuable undertakings. If certain projects seem to lead the child to repeat the same thing over and over again, or to turn to something trivial the minute a piece of work is finished, they cannot be called valuable. The difficulty with these criteria lies in the fact that their application demands a great deal more of intelligence and foresight in the teacher than does the mere conscientious following of a definite course of study prepared in advance. "We desire to have a child wish what he does; we do not necessarily care to have him do as he wishes," Dr. Kilpatrick has explained. But project work often was misunderstood to mean just exactly letting children do what they wish.

From the point of view of good curriculum making, the project method requires a great deal of thought in order to assure for the child a rounded school experience in any given year as well as throughout his school career as a whole. There must be a development in the completeness and value of children's projects from month to month and from year to year. There must not be undue repetition in later grades of

projects carried through in the earlier years. A great deal of consultation between teachers and supervisors and subject-matter experts is needed in order to plan for a well-balanced progress throughout the year, with enough continuity to ensure sound scholarship.

Teaching by projects requires a better training for classroom teachers than was needed under the old regime. Much more accurate general information and, above all, the ability to use sources wisely and expeditiously are required for project teaching in even the lowest grades. A lively, intelligent group of seven-year-olds, encouraged to express and develop their own interests, may well be a challenge to a college-trained adult. For the well-trained teacher the delightful thing about the project method is just this demand upon her scholarship and abilities as a leader; for the poorly trained the project method becomes an exhausting task if not an utterly impossible one. Some of the difficulties which were encountered with project work were due to the poor general background of individual teachers, and the failure on the part of administrators to realize that cultural background is essential for success in such a program.

The method of purposeful activity may be carried out with success only by teachers who have a good working knowledge of child psychology and the psychology of learning. The ability to understand children as persons and the discernment to appreciate how much drill is needed before certain information is fixed and certain skills acquired are essential for success, for at each point in the development of the purposeful act the teacher should function as a skillful adult guide. Among many purposes, she helps the child decide upon the most fruitful. From a trial and error system of planning she helps him progress toward intelligent forethought. When the child sees the need for a technique in executing his plan, the teacher is there to help him get it; when he does not see the need, she should point it out. In the judging of results it is the teacher's part to hold each

child up to his own best standards and to see that his own best standards become progressively better. Although in all this she functions ideally as a guide rather than a taskmaster, she is none the less active and alert. Procedure of this sort requires real insight into the thoughts and feelings of children and real skill in giving formal training as it is required.

During the last two decades there have been many criticisms of the project method and the philosophy of education which lies behind it. Some of these criticisms have been entirely just, for, as already implied in this chapter, much trivial, poorly organized classroom work was excused on the ground that the project method was being pursued. Moreover, in certain progressive schools where the purposeful act was taken as the unit of classroom procedure throughout the kindergarten and the elementary grades, poor scholarship resulted; there were great gaps in the children's preparation when they came to undertake the work of the secondary school. Some years ago Harold Rugg, a most sincere and thorough student of curriculum theory and educational practice, remarked that one of the most serious criticisms of the so-called "progressive school" was lack of scholarship. However, Dr. Rugg and other open-minded students of the matter agreed that this poor scholarship was not inherent in the method of purposeful activity, but traceable rather to a failure of teachers and administrators to appreciate the great demands which such a method places upon everyone concerned — school heads, classroom teachers, and pupils. The dangers to scholarship and the difficulties of wisely guiding pupil purposing had been overlooked, in spite of the warnings of Dr. Kilpatrick and other leaders of the movement.

Yet for all the criticism, just and unjust, there had been a consistent effort in these intervening years to introduce the method of child activity into the public schools of the land, but to introduce it slowly and carefully, without jeopardizing good academic work. Partly because of the mistakes and misunderstandings which had grown up around the terms "pro-

ject" and "project method," a new terminology has been used in connection with the more recent attempts, with the result that "activity curriculum," "unit of work," "centers of interest," and "child experiences" are now more frequent expressions. Progressive public-school men in many states are working toward the introduction of an activity curriculum which will gradually replace the old cut-and-dried courses of study.

The activity curriculum proceeds on the assumption that among the normal interests and play purposes of children there are many which have possibilities for real social and educational usefulness. These interests and play purposes may well be imported into the classroom situation and utilized by the teacher in constructive ways without sacrificing the formal training in skills which many people consider essential. Units of work may be planned which are altogether in line with the normal child's interests and which are also valuable from the standpoint of formal education; and, within certain wide limits, these units of work may be planned in advance. For example, experienced teachers know that little children are interested in playing, and incidentally learning about, family life and home activities, and that somewhat older children are interested in the community life about them. Many of the problems which society faces in providing food, clothing, and shelter may profitably be studied by boys and girls without departing in any large measure from the sort of thing they would like to do if left to themselves. The activity curriculum also implies that play is the most effective method of learning, and that play may be introduced into the classroom and directed toward desirable ends, the teacher deciding beforehand what general direction it is to follow. A unit of work around family life has excellent play possibilities for the younger child; a unit of work around air transportation may enlist the enthusiastic interest and play energies of the older child.

In the selection of units of work for the activity curriculum the minimum formal requirements for the different grades

are kept in mind: reading, writing, numbers, and the social studies in the form appropriate to the grade in question are related to the unit of work as a center, or core. Sometimes practically all the work of a grade is fused in the unit; that is, each school subject is taught only as it affects the unit. For instance, if the third grade is studying Indian life, the reading and written English are carried on in the course of becoming acquainted with Indian legends; the oral-English teaching comes in connection with discussions or dramatization of Indian life; the arithmetic is taught as it is needed in the making of costumes, the arrangement of stage settings, the planning of a wigwam, and so on. As isolated subjects school activities thus lose their identity.

One of the immediate results of introducing even a conservative interpretation of the activity curriculum into the schools of the nation is just this breaking down of subject-matter barriers. From the first grade straight through to the senior year in college this is the tendency of contemporary educational experiment. As the child progresses through his school years this tendency toward fusion creates certain problems for him and for his teachers which do not concern us much in our dealings with the younger child. This is assuredly a wholesome and interesting trend, entirely in keeping with what we know of the way the human mind develops, and surely sound in early education. Just as planning, executing, and judging projects require delicate guidance of the child by the teacher, so the whole attempt at correlation, or fusion, requires careful checking upon attainments in the specific disciplines. It may well be that the activity curriculum unavoidably sacrifices certain conventional standards of attainment in some of the specific skills, and that the sacrifices made are justified. The intelligent teacher should know the extent of the sacrifice, and the intelligent supervisor or administrator must decide whether in any particular class or individual case it is wise to make it.

Any sort of radical change in the curriculum should be

accompanied by community education as to what is going forward. Parents, and even children, are sometimes very conservative; they assume certain things about school standards — that a first-grade child learns to read, that the third-grade child has made strides in writing and spelling and knows his multiplication tables. If the school does not achieve these results, the school's clients are entitled to an explanation, even though not to an apology.

The freer activity of the new schools makes it necessary to revise some of our popular notions about order and discipline in a classroom. Where there is play activity, there must be more noise than where children are all working "out of books." A very important part of the teacher's method lies in preserving an atmosphere of interested, active work and avoiding a general sense of confusion. Noise must not become so great that children's nerves are exhausted by the end of the day, but, on the other hand, an amount of noise which grates upon a teacher may not be at all confusing to the child. Teachers who work with projects and participate in an activity curriculum should give careful thought to the problem of classroom management. So far as possible children should aid in the making and enforcement of rules, but the teacher is finally responsible for the general atmosphere of the room.

A well-planned activity curriculum gives a variety of opportunities for individual children to contribute to the work of the group according to their special needs and abilities. Individualization of method is just as necessary here as in more formal school procedures; for many children it is easier to be passively receptive toward adult commands and suggestions than to take responsibility for independent choice and active participation in a group. Such children need special guidance in finding what they have to contribute to group undertakings, and special encouragement to give it. Ideally, the education of the child for participation in group projects begins in the preschool period, but for children who

have not had preschool training the adjustment must be made in the early grades.

The reader will see from this discussion that the *project method* and the *activity curriculum* are identical in their fundamental principles. Both call for purposeful activity on the part of children and for guidance on the part of teachers. Passivity and domination have no place in either. But it happens that in some situations the project method was first attempted in a somewhat extreme form, with teachers afraid to plan their curriculum in advance and with bewildered children swinging from one project to the next without at all understanding where they were going or why. On the other hand, the activity curriculum is associated with a much more conservative attempt to introduce child purposes into school procedure; in our fine modern courses of study appropriate activities for various age levels are suggested to the teacher to assist her in planning her work. Three of these courses of study, *The Primary Manual*, developed in connection with the curriculum study of the Cincinnati Public Schools, *Guiding Growth in Christian Living*, the primary grade manual prepared under the supervision of the Department of Education of the Catholic University of America, and the *Curriculum Bulletins* published by the Board of Education of New York City, have been used in the preparation of the following chapters of this book.

In the field of early childhood education, much work is yet to be done in integrating the curriculum for the child from two to nine in the light of a philosophy of experience. It is here suggested that to clarify thinking on this subject it would be well to do away with the separate captions, "nursery school," "kindergarten," and "primary school," and to think in terms of age levels. What educational experiences are most desirable for the three-year-old, the five-year-old, the eight-year-old? Such a procedure would be a first step toward the synthesis of three quite divergent attitudes: that of the nursery school, directly grounded upon

currently approved psychological and sociological principles; that of the kindergarten, which often reveals a trace of the kindergarten's traditional isolationism despite the strong movement toward unification; and that of the primary school with its historic emphasis upon the three R's and formal education. A well-integrated school experience for the child from five to nine must satisfy two basic criteria: its appropriateness for the child at each age level, and, second, its provision for enriching and enlarging its activities in the light of the young child's previous group experiences. This is a new problem, intensified by the fact that a greater and greater percentage of the kindergarten entrants have already had two years or so of nursery school experience. Therefore they are, or should be, more competent socially than children who have had no such experience, and they have played with and explored the possibilities of many of the materials which the kindergarten offers. They have painted, played with clay, built with blocks, played in the sand with other children under the guidance of a teacher for two years; the kindergarten teacher therefore must know how to present in a challenging manner, the new experiences these nursery school graduates are to have under her direction. She must know how to *enrich* the curriculum to meet the more mature needs of group-experienced fives. The first-grade teacher is not without problems on her own account in dealing with "educated" first graders. Many of them have now had three years or more of group experience; still, as will appear in the discussions in following chapters, the teacher is by no means encouraged, these days, to rush first-grade pupils into reading or formal number work. She on her part must learn to enrich experiences through reading readiness activities and through further experiment with graphic and plastic expression, and she must carry on this enrichment process so successfully that her pupils as well as she herself are satisfied with the grade's progress. For this reason she has to explore the possibilities of expressive

work herself, and study the play life of the six-year-old as earnestly as she ever studied methods of teaching reading. Otherwise bored, blasé children and frustrated teachers will be many. True, these same first-grade children will be in second grade next year, the third grade will have advanced to the fourth. The next step may not be overlooked, but the best current practice today is learning how to build from the bottom up, assured that if the structure is sound at its base the top will take care of itself.

Nursery schools, whatever their faults and weaknesses in practice, base their procedure upon the life needs of little children. A nursery school has no motive beyond being the best possible sort of nursery, since nurseries are the right environment for toddlers. Whether or not the name "nursery school" survives, the consistent philosophy which that name implies should distinguish not only our group work with children two and three years old, but our work with sixes and sevens and eights as well. This does not mean that the informality of the nursery school should be indefinitely prolonged, or that teaching of formal skills should be deferred beyond all reason. What is natural, right, and proper for the two-year-old differs from what is best for the older child. With the passing of the years the child develops to the place where he appreciates the need for the tools which formal teaching places in his hands. He grows increasingly conventional; he is ready and eager to try to approximate conventional standards. By the time he is mentally six he normally not only does not resist learning to read, but actually desires to do so. If there is some resistance to hard work at the beginning, in the normal healthy child the sense of power which a mastery of reading gives him soon overcomes the resistance. Insistence that the nursery school is an example to the rest of the school in its honesty of approach to educational problems does not imply a recommendation that freedom from conventional requirements should be prolonged beyond a sensible time. It is probably

as natural for the six-year-old to work at reading as it is for the three-year-old to play with toys most of the day. The point at issue is not how long the school can maintain the informality of a nursery school, but how consistently it can bring itself to do what is best for the child at each age level.

One of the most radical and, undoubtedly, one of the most worthy efforts of the modern school to depart from the older tradition is found in the attempt to make school life a part of real life, to break down the old barrier which the school's walls formed between the interests of the community and the interests of the scholar. The success which one school achieved in this direction is nicely expressed in the comment of a ten-year-old pupil, who remarked at the luncheon table: "I like the W—— school. It is just like living." No greater compliment could be paid a school. But in this wholly laudable attempt to give reality and vitality to school experience the selective function of organized education must not be forgotten. Schools developed, in the first place, to do better than the home or the general community something which needed to be done for the young generation. The reason for their continued existence is that they can do certain important things better than home and other institutions. A well-trained teaching personnel, adequate professional leadership of faculties, provision for buildings and equipment, theoretically make it possible for every school, from the nursery group to the university, to select and perform adequately certain functions which the home and the community are not equipped to carry on. The school is a supplement, of a very important sort, to home and community education. As such it should not duplicate what is being done for the child elsewhere unless such duplication gives real reinforcement. In the nursery school the more closely certain aspects of the home situation are approached the better; the school is simply a large group home where benefits are shared and expert guidance is provided. But as the child passes on through four-year-old and five-year-old and

six-year-old groups, his interests and abilities demand more and more a kind of environment and guidance not represented by the home. In one sense home and school become more and more different, and properly so. Recognizing how vast are the needs of the child today for education and guidance in many different directions, it would be reprehensible to duplicate effort and otherwise waste energy by failing to select with great care those activities and experiences which are most needed and which can be best provided by the school. The adults of any generation are all more or less responsible for selecting what the young generation shall be taught, but the school as a highly specialized agency is particularly responsible for choosing and encouraging at each age level those experiences which are most valuable for the individual and significant for the social group. When the school extends its interests downward to include the earliest years, as an institution it becomes responsible for exercising its selective responsibility here just as conscientiously as at the higher age levels.

Herein lies the real problem of integrating the work of the lower school: in selecting for the child of two, three, four, five, or six years those activities which are the most valuable and the most interesting for him to carry on in the school group at each age level. Neither early school groups among themselves nor the school and the home should wastefully duplicate effort; reinforcement rather than duplication, and enrichment rather than repetition, are the ends to be desired throughout the child's school progress. Consistency of approach and carefully planned variety and progression are the essentials of an integrated activity curriculum.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss the quotation from Professor Dewey appearing at the head of this chapter. What is meant by a

"philosophy of experience"? Why is a philosophy so important to the innovator in education? How does the popular saying, "learn to do through doing," apply in this discussion?

2. Review and discuss the typical attitudes toward the child and his curriculum which have influenced the more conservative kindergarten, the primary school, and the nursery school respectively. What possible conflicts of opinion may arise in an attempt to harmonize the three points of view in a school situation?
3. What do you recommend in the case of a child who has lost interest in self-directed activities?
4. What are the advantages, theoretical and practical, of grouping children according to age rather than grade status?
5. How may the 100 per cent promotion plan operate to make the integration and enrichment of early childhood education from year to year more feasible?
6. How would you expect a kindergarten group in which most of the members had had nursery school experience to differ from a group not having such experience?
7. Make a list of suggestions for evaluating children's purposes.
8. Describe as you are thus far able to visualize it the role of the teacher in the initiation of a "project" or "activity."
9. How should the outcome of an activity be evaluated?
10. How do the skills, reading, writing, and numbers, function in an activity curriculum?

CHAPTER VII

Exploring the Natural Environment

You were made for enjoyment, and the world was filled with things which you will enjoy, unless you are too proud to be pleased with them, or too grasping to care for what you cannot turn to other account than mere delight.

JOHN RUSKIN ¹

Living today is essentially hazardous and adventurous. Children must be taught to judge between bad adventures and good adventures. . . . Safe living saves one from bad adventures for more and better adventures.

ASSOCIATION FOR CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ²

Exploration and enjoyment of the natural environment are delights of childhood and youth; as an avocation or as pure recreation, an inquiring interest in the world about us is retained throughout life by fortunate adults. It is equally true that an intelligent understanding of certain laws gov-

¹ John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, Vol. I, Chap. II.

² Association for Childhood Education, "Growing Up Safely," *Bulletin* 3, 1946.

erning the natural phenomena which condition our lives makes for safe living and helps us to experience more and better adventures. The explorations and adventures of the young school child are extremely simple and limited, from an adult standpoint. But they are nonetheless full of significance for the child's growth and health — physical, intellectual, and emotional — and the intelligent guidance of observation, exploration, and experiment on the part of her pupils constitutes one of the most important tasks of the teacher of young children. The nursery baby's interest in manipulating things, in poking and prying into every nook and corner of his small world, provides a natural starting point and a vigorous motive power for his education in the areas of health and safety, as well as in nature study and the beginnings of the physical sciences. To use this active interest constructively the teacher needs on her own part an inquiring spirit, a lively imagination, and a fund of useful information. Adults who either "know all the answers" or don't care about knowing them, and those who lack the imagination to sense the educational possibilities of the ordinary, everyday environment can hardly succeed in directing the active investigations of the very young into worth-while channels. On the other hand, for teachers possessed of the needed vision and skill the natural environment as it affects the child's health, safety, intellectual growth, and aesthetic enjoyment is full of possibilities for the enrichment of experience and consequently for the satisfactory integration of the curriculum in early childhood education.

LEARNING THE RULES OF SAFETY AND HEALTH

Modern principles of child training emphasize *learning* on the child's part rather than *teaching* on the part of the adult. Under intelligent guidance, the child learns through his own experiences to take care of himself. For this learning to progress satisfactorily, it is first of all necessary to arrange the environment so that the learner is challenged to explore and adventure, and so that the natural consequences of mis-

takes will not be dangerous ones. Natural consequences are the best of teachers, but at times in the history of education the need for assuring physical safety has been overlooked by enthusiastic writers on the subject.

A second prerequisite for satisfactory learning through active exploration is an alert and intelligent teacher. In addition to recognizing and using good teaching opportunities, she must be sensitive to all the child's needs and concerned for his mental as well as his physical well-being. Many children develop fears and inhibitions as the result of overcaution on the part of adults during the experimentations of the nursery years, or as reactions to thoughtless ways of stating safety rules. "Hold on to the railing," may be a much needed suggestion when Johnny is at the top of the slide. Calmly stated, the direction helps him learn how to handle himself. "Look out! You'll fall!" startles and inhibits, teaching nothing except fear of mishap. "Never, never go near fire!" is terrifying to certain children; to others it is an invitation to reckless experimentation. "Be careful when you light a match!" suggests intelligence and control in dealing with a powerful, fascinating, and dangerous element.

A third prerequisite, which is dependent upon the teacher's technique, is a positive reaction to experiences on the part of the learner. This reaction includes a certain amount of reflection, increasing with the learner's age, and either a resulting eagerness to try again or a common-sense conclusion that a particular adventure was unpleasant in its consequences or simply not much fun. Sometimes in the course of reflection children need help in discovering that some adventures require more control of the body, more mature coordinations, than an individual child has so far developed. Eight-year-old Mary may have the control needed to walk on the fence, while seven-year-old Johnny on the same fence is inviting disaster. A tactful adult can help Johnny see, and accept, a temporary limitation; it is not necessary to wait until Johnny learns the hard way, by breaking his arm. On the other hand, it is most important to reassure Johnny about

his own physical prowess. Perhaps he manages himself beautifully on the horizontal bars, or rides a tricycle with speed and control.

The extent to which the young child can learn basic health habits experimentally is limited, and varies with the individual case. Food, sleep, personal cleanliness, proper clothing, the avoidance of infection — the major topics in health education — are all concerned with effective ways of behaving as well as information and, finally, an understanding of principles. In each area emphasis should be upon the pupil's learning rather than the teacher's teaching, and in the entire field of health education good practice at present indicates a modification of earlier theories. Ten and fifteen years ago, for instance, nutritionists stressed above all else the importance of a balanced diet. Nursery school teachers and parents exhausted their ingenuity and often their patience in trying to get every child to accept every nutritious food. Recent experiments have shown that children left to choose their own diets from a variety of foods offered them approximated well-balanced diets in the long run, in spite of occasional "food jags." It now seems far more important to have the child eat adequately and happily than to have him learn to accept the flavor of parsnips and cooked cabbage in spite of his aversion for them. Battles over food in the home and more scientific struggles in the nursery school are therefore less frequent than once they were.

By the time the child is old enough to accept facts and information about food, his basic food habits are well established. But they may be modified during school years — by skillful radio programs and other effective methods of enlisting new interests. Experiments in the feeding of animals are good teaching devices at times: a guinea pig deprived of cabbage or lettuce in his diet will soon pine, and will as rapidly recover if these important foods are restored before too much damage is done.

In many preschool and lower grades, the teacher has some opportunity to help develop right food habits in connection

with the midmorning lunch. If milk or orange juice and crackers are served by the school, emphasis can be laid upon proper service, upon tidiness and cleanliness, and upon the right social atmosphere for mealtime. With four-year-olds and five-year-olds considerable ceremony is worth while because they are just learning to eat in a group. In some communities the careful serving of a midmorning lunch is well worth school time for the health training and social experience it gives even with children six and seven years old. If the children bring their own midmorning lunches from home, the teacher has an opportunity for health teaching in connection with the lunch period by commenting upon good selections and good ways of wrapping up a lunch. But this is a situation which takes great tact in the handling, and it is probably best to try to convince the parents that a few cents a week for milk and crackers, nicely served at school, is a worthy investment. When children bring their lunches, whether midmorning or midday, it is hard to prevent "swapping" them. Mrs. Smith's cream cheese and lettuce sandwiches are cheerfully exchanged for Mrs. Jones's pastry and dill pickle. The teacher has to have eyes in the back of her head to prevent such exchanges, and much tact to forbid them without hurting feelings.

The matter of eating breakfast before going to school is very important for the young child's health and frequently presents a problem. The child who dashes off to school without eating breakfast is very common. Parents, of course, are responsible for seeing that children have a proper breakfast and eat it, but the school can help a great deal, directly or indirectly, in many cases. For instance, describing to one's teacher what is eaten for breakfast is sometimes an incentive to eating properly. Naturally it is very easy to romance; but if the truth is encouraged and not too much praise and blame are lavished, respectively, on good or poor breakfast records, such reports and discussions present good opportunities for health teaching.

The teacher of young children can help the breakfast

situation indirectly by being reasonable on the subject of punctuality. Of course punctuality is the concern of the school; but with the younger pupils a good breakfast eaten slowly is much more important than arriving on the dot of 8:45 at the school gate.

The teaching of personal hygiene presents different problems in different communities. In some situations the very rudiments of bathing, washing heads, and cleaning teeth have to be taught; in others the children are so well cared for at home that such teaching is uncalled for altogether. In all these personal, intimate areas of the teacher's responsibility a great deal of tact is required. Care should be taken not to embarrass children and parents, even in groups where standards appear very low. In mixed groups, in which some children are well cared for and others neglected and unclean, special care should be taken never to make issues of personal cleanliness which injure the feelings of individuals. Children can learn in school to wash their hands before eating and after going to the bathroom, and to take reasonable care of their clothing by wearing aprons when working with paint and clay, in the course of the regular routines. The lavatories should be well supervised by the teachers themselves, and any difficulties which arise should be carefully handled. In the old days a teacher of young children thought herself abused if she were not assigned a maid to take children to the bathroom. Nowadays no intelligent teacher cares to relegate this important part of her work to any but a very competent assistant.

Rest and relaxation are as important for growing children as food. It is hard to provide for them adequately in these days of noise and haste and crowded living. Data on the proper quota of sleep for children of different ages are available, although no absolute rules can as yet be laid down. In general the nursery child two to four years of age should have 12 or 13 hours of rest in 24, the child four to six needs 11 or 12 hours, and the child seven or eight a good 10½ hours.

With the younger child 1 to 2 hours of this sleeping time are taken up by the midday nap. Probably the midday nap should be continued much later in children's lives than it is in present practice.

The teacher in the school run on a country day school plan is responsible for the midday rest, and needs to work out a technique for managing it so that children will really relax. Her own manner is an important factor. If the adult is quietly certain that the children will relax, they usually do; if she wonders whether they will or not, they very generally don't. The arrangements for resting should be adequate — proper cots, proper covering, and plenty of ventilation, or a good sleeping porch. A good point in technique is to have the room dark and suggesting quiet when the children come into it. It is often a help to read quietly to children of six and seven during the first few minutes.

Schools which provide for midday rest as a part of their regular program are likely to be fairly well equipped to carry it out. But the teacher in the average preschool and primary classroom faces real difficulties in her attempt to provide a period of relaxation for her children. Such relaxation is actually needed, for no matter how well managed the home and school regime may be, working and playing in a group is tiring to the young child, and the whole intense pressure of modern life has its general effect upon the adjustment of children as well as upon the nerves of adults.

It is unfortunately true that good resting situations are difficult to provide in an average classroom. If, however, rests are necessary for the well-being of children, and authorities seem to agree that this is the case, it is incumbent upon schools to provide facilities for resting, even at the cost of sacrificing space now employed for other purposes. Canvas cots can be provided at reasonable cost; they are both comfortable and sanitary. Blankets may be requisitioned from the home. Storage of both cots and blankets again demands space, but a little ingenuity and imagination often

disclose forgotten spaces which can be converted for storage without prejudice to other possible uses.

Older methods of providing for rest periods, once widely in vogue, are now disapproved by child-care agencies. There was for instance the custom of having the children rest with their heads upon desk or table. This solution of the resting problem came into general disrepute some years ago, because of the poor posture which it encourages. There followed various schemes for providing rest on flat surfaces, a method desirable from the postural standpoint. Tables were sometimes used, with blankets for covering. More frequently the children lay upon the floor, wrapped in blankets. The disadvantages of both these devices are apparent. Resting on a table makes any free movement dangerous, hence real relaxation becomes impossible. Floors, no matter how conscientiously cleaned, are not clean enough to use as resting places; blankets cannot be kept in a sanitary condition if they are used on floors. Besides, floors are drafty places, even if covered by thick newspaper mats or other ingenious devices. Teachers and supervisors who encourage this method should be invited to try the scheme for themselves a few times, studying its limitations through personal experience with floor resting.

While the school's responsibility for providing a good resting situation is serious enough to justify discussion of it, more important still is the child's positive learning through the resting activity. If the right facilities have been provided and the teacher does her part, the children should begin to learn the art of relaxation. With a little help even three and fours soon know when they are really resting. This help is best given individually, by pointing out children who look comfortable and sleepy, and by going about feeling knees and elbows, looking for those which are "loose" instead of "tight." Well-selected music is an important aid, either good instrumental music or well-chosen records. Older children may be permitted to look at books. Beginning teachers es-

pecially need to be reminded that the aim of the quiet period is relaxation — not immobility or absolute silence. If cots are not provided probably the best procedure is to invite the children to sit comfortably, regardless of posture.

Normal children do not require much encouragement to play vigorously — when properly dressed they enjoy playing in the open air, unless there is something they greatly want to do indoors. The school should make every effort to arrange as much outdoor play as possible and to add to its appeal by providing good play equipment. Home and school should cooperate in selecting and caring for warm, comfortable, and serviceable outdoor garments. Ski suits are excellent. Knitted suits are warm, cozy, and most attractive in moderately cold weather; but soft knitted fabrics are not good windbreaks and are poor protection against wet. For prolonged play in winter weather a hard-surfaced cloth is the most satisfactory for outer garments. A light knitted sweater inside adds to warmth and comfort.

Parents often think, and sometimes with justice, that teachers are lax in their supervision of the child's physical welfare in connection with this matter of wraps. No one wants teachers to fuss over children, but it is a definite part of their responsibility, especially in the modern school regime, to see that their charges are properly clothed while under their care. Ski suits should be worn when needed, even if some child is lazy about putting his suit on or if some of the zippers have rusted and have to be manipulated by the teacher. Rubbers must be worn in wet weather; in well-regulated groups this is the law of the Medes and Persians. Beginning teachers find all this detail very exacting. The capable soon reduce it to routine and learn a few simple methods to determine whether or not children are warm and comfortable. One such method is to feel under the child's chin. If the flesh is warm and very slightly moist, he is comfortable; if it is dry and cold, he is not dressed warmly enough, even if he (and often his mother) protests that he

is. When he is actively perspiring, the child is too warmly dressed.

The expression "routine" was not intended to imply that individual differences among children can be ignored. Parents and pediatricians have many fads and fancies. In infancy individual children are reared according to these fancies, and accordingly become accustomed to much or little clothing. These individual peculiarities have to be regarded. The tactful teacher keeps in mind certain general rules of clothing; that it should be clean, loose, easily put on and off, and, if possible, attractive and becoming; that rubbers are needed for wet; and that leather or hard-surfaced fabric is needed for breaking the wind. Within these general rules she tries to see that individual children are comfortable and happy.

When nursery schools were new, many pediatricians questioned their usefulness because of the supposed danger of infection as a result of bringing small children into groups. In the quarter century of its growing popularity in this country the nursery school has demonstrated rather conclusively that this fear was unwarranted. Very careful and conscientious help and supervision has resulted in good health records. In a well-regulated group any child with a noticeable snuffle or other untoward symptom is immediately isolated; when circumstances permit, he is sent home. All children are very carefully supervised by the teachers themselves and by nurses and medical officers. Such care might well be extended more adequately than at present to children in all the primary grades.

As a part of the prevention of infectious diseases, children themselves may be taught some rudimentary precautions — to cover their faces when they are coughing and sneezing, not to put in their mouths things which have been on the floor, to keep food clean, and to avoid the use of the common drinking cup. In the upper primary grades they may learn in a very elementary way about the action of

microorganisms. But such teaching must be given with due regard for mental as well as physical hygiene. It is possible, even easy, to give sensitive children real phobias about germs. The records of child-guidance clinics show this, for they provide instances of children afraid to drink anything out of a glass lest they "get sick and die," and who were very much afraid of mysterious creatures called "germs."

The principles in accordance with which the modern teacher bases her procedure in the areas of health and safety education may be summarized as follows:

1. The adult's primary aim is to help children learn, therefore the emphasis throughout is upon child activity rather than teacher precept. The acceptance of the basic rules for health and safety should be learned in the course of the child's earliest contacts with the physical environment.

2. An aim correlative to the one just stated is the protection of the child from experimentation which threatens to lead to serious injury or fatality. This aim is best achieved by the following procedures: (a) the provision of an environment as free from serious hazards as possible; (b) the making of positive health and safety rules, as few in number as possible and as intelligible to the children as their mental maturity permits; (c) the "enforcement" of these rules with as little friction as possible, always taking the attitude that they are incumbent upon the adult as well as upon the children.

3. As the children grow more competent, the teacher aims to help them make their own rules as the result of their own experience.

4. "The young child is greatly influenced by the standards of health set up and discussed in school; he is the messenger to the home, often insisting in a childlike way that he and other members of the family follow these standards. He learns (or finds confirmed in his mother's teaching) that eating good food, getting enough sleep and rest, and playing outdoors, are some of the important ways to help his body

grow and become stronger.”³ Since the child is easily impressed by what he learns in school, and is also “the messenger to the home,” the competent teacher will try at all times to enlist the cooperation of the parents in helping the child learn competence and independence in his adjustment to safety and health requirements. Realizing that the child’s whole physical hygiene — his nutrition, his cleanliness, and his sleeping habits — is an area in which his home training is very much involved and in which the parent often feels frustrated and sometimes feels guilty, a large measure of tact and human understanding is required in the enlistment of parent cooperation. It is important for the school officer to put herself as far as possible in the mother’s place, and to begin by letting the mother see that the teacher is aware of some of her difficulties and accepts her as a competent parent. “I know it must be difficult to get Johnny off in good shape in the morning, when you are in a hurry to get to your job and the older children are rushing off to school as well. I don’t see how you manage. Is there anything we can do at this end to help?” An approach of this sort is much sounder than a direct attack on the score of Johnny’s poor nutrition, the indications he gives of insufficient sleep, or worst of all, his untidy or dirty appearance.

PLANNING HEALTH AND SAFETY ACTIVITIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The Nursery School

In the junior nursery school, the effort to develop good habits in the areas of health and safety is entirely incidental to the usual play activities of two- and three-year-olds. The teacher is most concerned with encouraging the children to accept basic routines as a matter of course, and with developing the beginnings of caution. With the child of this age, the

³ The Catholic University of America, Sister Mary Joan, O.P., and Sister Mary Nona, O.P., *Guiding Growth in Christian Social Living*, Vol. 1.

environment should be so planned that the essentials of health and safety are assured and that the teacher need not call attention to hazards. It is good, however, to make positive comments frequently. "Big boy! You held on to the railing, didn't you?" "That's right, Mary. Wait for your turn." "How good the sun feels!"—and similar remarks if aptly made help underscore useful or pleasant experiences.

In the senior nursery groups very simple rules can be developed by the children. The consistent application of these rules in relevant situations constitutes good teaching. "Feet first, going down the slide!" "Keep the scissors pointed down!" (even though the scissors have blunted tips.) "Stand back from the swings." "Keep in our part of the play-yard." "Wash hands after using the toilet." "Wash hands before we eat." "We always wait for the green light." These and numerous other simple regulations appropriate to the particular situation should be developed and employed consistently as needed.

The Kindergarten and Primary Grades

The *Primary Manual* published by the Cincinnati public schools states:

The kindergarten should establish basic safety attitudes, habits, and skills; grades one through three should build upon, reenforce, and add to these attitudes, habits, and skills. Repetition in all four grades of the kindergarten-primary level should not be avoided; rather, it should be encouraged.

. . . safety is most effectively taught in connection with the children's daily routine activities in the classroom, in the school building, and on the school grounds; with construction work; and with activities in social studies, music, science, language arts, and physical education.⁴

While incidental instruction in safety is important and effective, it does not take the place of a planned program. Teacher of lower primary grades are encouraged to project

⁴ Cincinnati Public Schools, *Primary Manual*, p. 391.

a planned safety program, and to provide for pupil activities which "permit planning and acting in situations involving safety."⁵ The *Primary Manual* organizes suggestions for a planned safety program under the following headings: Helpers for Safety; Safety in the Classroom and the School Building; Safety in Play; Safety in Travel; Safety in the Home; Safety through the Year. An illustrative lesson plan under the heading "Safety in the Classroom and School Building" is the following:

*The Drinking Fountain*⁶

Activities

Make up rules for the correct use of the drinking fountain such as the following:

Learn to stand in line

Wait your turn

Stand still while waiting your turn

Move slowly in line

Avoid touching the fountain with your lips

Practice keeping the rules

Practice drinking the water from the side if the flow goes sufficiently high

The following comments from the *Cincinnati Manual* represent the best current opinion concerning health education at the kindergarten and primary levels:

Health in the kindergarten and primary grades may be most effectively taught in connection with regular classroom activities. This procedure provides natural occasions for the practice of health habits. Therefore, teachers should refer to the several sections in the *Manual* . . . for a complete list of units in which health instruction may be emphasized. . . .

A number of routine activities provide, almost daily, opportunity for developing health habits and attitudes in natural situations.⁷

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 391f.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 398f.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

The manual then lists greetings, going to the lavatory, supervised play period, midmorning lunch, rest period, and excursions within the building as providing such opportunity. It is recommended that special periods of health instruction be introduced in connection with natural situations, and that these special periods "should always give opportunity to apply health learnings acquired incidentally elsewhere."⁸

NATURE STUDY AND SCIENCE

"Nature study," or the observation of living things in the immediate environment, was for a long time the only approach to science in the lower school. Not so very long ago, the course of study consisted principally of sentimental, semiaccurate accounts of plant and animal life, with a strong religious flavor, supplemented by rather aimless observation of trees, birds, and flowers. The first change of emphasis came about when progressive educators saw possibilities for teaching children the facts of mating, propagation, gestation, and birth through observation of animal life. Teachers of younger school groups were then encouraged to allow the children to care for and observe families of guinea pigs, rabbits, or white mice, in the belief that protracted observation satisfies natural curiosity in the best possible way without arousing the morbid curiosity sometimes surrounding the phenomena of life. The value of such experiences is still undisputed, but the present tendency is to give them rather less emphasis than before in the whole nature study and science curriculum. As a means of sex education the observation of propagation among animals has only a limited usefulness; experiences with children show that queries concerning human life cannot be adequately answered in this fashion, and also demonstrate that too much emphasis on the processes of reproduction can be overstimulating and confusing to the young mind.

⁸ For the description of an illustrative unit for Grade III see *Ibid.*, p. 385.

For a long time the possibilities of the physical sciences for enriching the curriculum at lower age levels were but imperfectly explored. Teachers of young children were not usually too well informed themselves in the scientific field. But still the active, eager, inquiring child has many questions relating to this area. "Where does water go when the kettle boils dry?" "Can you make ice?" "Why does a cork float?" and so forth, not to mention endless questions about air transportation and other modern inventions. The work of Dr. Gerald Craig and his associates at Teachers College has been of the greatest value in helping teachers develop content and technique for answering such questions, and as a result many teachers are experimenting with lessons in the field of physical science in preschool and primary grades.

In order to be of real value, early school science teaching must be grounded in the experiences of the child, and must result in a genuine clarifying of ideas which are useful and interesting. The curriculum for the primary school published by the Catholic University of America, commenting upon the child's everyday experience with the things of nature explains that the child

... watches the clouds in the sky, listens to the song of the robin and the hum of insects, and feels the force of the wind pushing him along the street; he gathers autumn leaves, flowers, and fruits and brings them to school to share with others. As the days become shorter in the fall and longer in the spring, he notices the change in seasons. He plants bulbs and seeds and watches them grow; he feeds the fish in the aquarium; he enjoys caring for pets and assumes responsibility for them. In all these activities the child has firsthand experiences with the things of nature. He continually asks "What?" and "Why?" and begins to see relationships. The generalizations which he makes help to build up for him a body of knowledge which will serve in meeting situations that arise in his daily living.

To emphasize essential understandings, the science program is organized in terms of *concepts* to be developed. This development necessarily calls for the scientific procedure of questioning,

observing, experimentation, and discussion on the part of the child.⁹

Effective guidance of young children in their development of scientific concepts requires of the adult an adequate understanding of their mental maturity and a sensitivity to the special needs of individuals. Not by any means all experiences with the natural environment are either clarified or enhanced by early lessons in science; many are best left as purely aesthetic impressions or happenings arousing a passing wonder which will one day stimulate true intellectual curiosity. Egocentricity with a consequent lack of any genuine interest in physical causality is a recognized characteristic of the young child concerning which there is a good deal of controversy. Investigators are not yet agreed as to the usual degree of such egocentricity at the various age levels, but one is not surprised to find in the course of teaching experience that many questions asked by little children which might be mistakenly construed as requiring careful, scientific answers are simply asked for the purpose of getting adult attention. On the other hand, a proportion of the child's questions about natural phenomena are genuine, and many early childhood experiences may well be enriched through helping the child mind grasp a scientific explanation of observed happenings. The proportion of such questions and such experiences increases with age, and varies with individual mental capacity.

Teaching Nature Study and Science

The Nursery School. The little child in the junior nursery school delights in playing with sand and water; chuckles happily when he falls in a snow drift, provided it is not deep enough to frighten him; pursues a balloon gleefully until he grabs it and squeezes it, causing it to burst. He loves to watch soap bubbles and pinwheels, but his interest in them is short-lived. He is interested in living things; if he has not

⁹ Catholic University of America, *op. cit.*, pp. 119f.

been frightened by furry animals, he will maul pussy until her life is in danger, or until he discovers that "pussy has pins in her feet," as one two-year-old put it. An even-tempered dog is a good companion, and will be a help to him in learning to treat living things with gentleness.

A good nursery school environment for the two- and three-year-olds will include an aquarium, a few growing things, a succession of visiting pets, a sand table and an outdoor play space providing sand and water play, balls and wheeled toys and tumble toys, an occasional experience with soap bubbles and pinwheels. Many of the small pupils will watch the goldfish attentively for minutes; they should be allowed to do so without clumsy adult comment. Growing things add to the general attractiveness of the environment. Visiting pets add interest and help the child learn how living things react; they may aid in the removal of fear, but as they may also arouse fear their introduction should be carefully planned and experiences with them be carefully guided. Sand and water play give endless pleasure in manipulation, and a growing acquaintance with the "feel" of the physical environment which will later develop into pleasure in experimenting with many sorts of plastic materials. Playing with wheels and tumble toys gives further experience with the properties of things; soap bubbles and pinwheels at least give an inkling of fascinating things which can be made to happen.

The four-year-olds are capable of maintaining some sustained interest in the life habits of turtles and guppies and polliwogs and goldfish; they may learn to feed these pets. At this age level fairly permanent pets, for the welfare of which the children are at least partly responsible, should be introduced into the nursery environment. For instance, children of this age may help clean the rabbit hutch, and will generally enjoy feeding the bunnies and watching them nibble their food. They may also help to water plants and arrange cut flowers, and above all they may begin to enjoy

gardening, no matter how limited the facilities. At four the impulse to dig up the seed or the bulb is still very strong, but by the end of the four-year-old's school year pride in his own plant or garden plot has generally taught restraint in this matter.

The Kindergarten and Primary Grades. Kindergarten and primary children are interested in a rapidly widening range of natural phenomena. The Cincinnati *Manual* states, "All science activity in the kindergarten should develop out of some interest or need of the group."¹⁰ Science topics are organized in the *Manual* around the headings Animal Life; Plant Life; Physical Science; Excursions; Making Science Collections. Physical Science activities are related to Heat; Light and Shadows; Balance; Sound; Water; Suggested Experiments. Among the illustrative units described on the kindergarten level are a unit on "Butterflies and Moths" and a unit on "Gardening." The science curriculum for the first grade is planned to answer such questions as "How May Fires Be Prevented and Put Out?" "How Can Sound Be Made?" and to treat such topics as "Shadow Fun" and "Magnets." Suggested questions for the second grade include "How Can We Tell How Big Things Are?" "How Is A Thermometer Used?" "What Foods Do Living Things Need?" Among questions for the third grade are found "Why Do Some Things Float and Others Sink?" "How Are Fires Best Made and Kept Up?" "How Is the Earth Lighted and Heated?"

The Cincinnati *Primary Manual*, representative as it is of the best progressive educational thought, thus illustrates in its course of study in science the principle that a well-integrated curriculum is an experience curriculum, gradually broadening and deepening to meet the expanding needs and interests of the growing child.

Making Science Collections. Collecting is a natural impulse which is strong at the kindergarten-primary level,

¹⁰ Cincinnati Public Schools, *op. cit.*, p. 435.

indiscriminate hoarding gradually giving way to selective preference as specialized interests are developed. The impulse is easily used to motivate the making of collections in connection with lower school science collections. Many children begin making collections at home, and are glad to bring contributions to the "science corner." Nuts, leaves, weeds, and rocks are among the first collections; insects may scarcely be collected successfully before the third grade, as the technique of mounting them is too difficult for the young child. Kindergarten children are content to arrange their collections without labels; they enjoy the sheer pleasure of manipulating the objects gathered, placing and replacing them for the fun of the activity. The first grade is beginning to read labels, and may enjoy placing a few. By the third grade, the science corner has frequently grown into a science museum, carefully labeled and proudly exhibited to visitors.

The making of collections is not only valuable for science teaching, but also encourages the development of a permanent hobby. In addition, the visual discriminations cultivated through the science corner are important factors in reading readiness.

EXCURSIONS

Excursions have long been recognized as educational activities. Their value, however, depends upon how well they are chosen, planned for, and carried out. Teachers of young children frequently tire themselves out with excursions, with little gain to their pupils. There should be abundant, competent help on excursions, to relieve strain and save the teacher's energy for instruction instead of wasting it by too incessant counting of heads. Trips should be short, unless adequate transportation by bus can be provided. Each should be discussed with the children beforehand, and the points to be observed agreed upon by the group. Some sort of checkup through expressional activities should follow the excursion, in the case of groups six years old and older, but

the teacher must be careful not to take the joy out of the children's recollections by too rigorous probing. The spontaneous reaction in picture, story, or poem is always to be preferred to the routinized one. With little children of kindergarten and nursery age only the spontaneous reaction has any value, and the adult must exercise patience, for sometimes this reaction is long delayed.

THE TEACHING OF NUMBER IN THE LOWER SCHOOL

Arithmetic drill was an important activity in the schools of yesterday. Such drill is still conceded to be valuable for the older elementary school child, but after scrutinizing the whole psychology of number learning very carefully for the past twenty-five years, progressive educators now recommend that the understanding of *mathematical relations* be developed in advance of teaching "number facts." The New York City school system, for instance, is initiating a wide experimental program. Quoting the curriculum bulletin which announces this experiment,

The developmental approach is based upon the recognition that thinking and understanding of the mathematical meaning of numbers and processes must precede mechanical work with numbers. It stresses a gradual transition from the concrete use of numbers in real experiences to abstract thinking with numbers in arithmetic.

The aims of the program are: (1) to effect an understanding of quantitative relationships; (2) to give the children the ability to use numbers in life situations; (3) to develop more wholesome personalities by relating arithmetic to child needs and interests.

Accordingly, the arithmetic program is being developed in consonance with the changing needs and interests of the child.¹¹

In accordance with these principles, the emphasis during the first three years of the primary school is upon developing an understanding of numbers up to 100. Gradually the

¹¹ Board of Education of the City of New York, *Curriculum Materials*, Vol. II, No. 1, November, 1947.

children learn to manipulate these numbers by adding, subtracting, multiplying, dividing, and introducing fractions and decimals, but not performing these operations until each new relationship is thoroughly understood before it is applied. The "Tens Frame"¹² is used through the third grade class, to assure "a gradual transition from the concrete use of numbers in real experience to abstract thinking with numbers in arithmetic."

Number Experiences in the Nursery School

"We have found that it is not until the age of four that 72 per cent of a given age group can respond correctly to the question, 'How many?' when two objects are presented."

The above statement, found in *The Measurement of Intelligence* by Terman and Merrill,¹³ is a significant indication of how slight is the nursery school child's understanding of number relationships. In the course of exploring the possibilities of a well-planned environment, however, he is daily experiencing number, and a skillful teacher helps him to assimilate this experience so that he gradually acquires a background of meanings. The nursery teacher does not teach arithmetic lessons, by any means; she is merely alert to the possibilities of helping the child gradually to develop clear concepts. The more varied the activities and the more alert the teacher, the more opportunity and incentive the children have to notice difference in size, quantity, and distance; to estimate, measure, and finally to count. One truck for John, one for Mary, because there are two trucks. Half an apple for Susan, and half for Paul, because there is only one apple. Five "swings" for Sally, because Marjorie wants a turn. One, two, three steps down to the ground. Big blocks help to build a bridge; little ones fill in little spaces. Day in, day out, more experi-

¹² A form of abacus.

¹³ Lewis Terman and Maud Merrill, *Measurement of Intelligence*, p. 341.

ences with number, so that the child enters kindergarten well versed in the concrete use of number which is the foundation upon which the arithmetic program is to be built.

Curriculum Bulletin II, 1947-1948 series, issued by the New York City Board of Education, suggests "a program for the teaching of arithmetic in the kindergarten and first three grades" . . . developed in close collaboration with the "Developmental Arithmetic Project"¹⁴ (described in the previous quotation from *Curriculum Materials*, Vol. II, No. 1). Part I of the *Bulletin* deals with "the mathematical aspects of arithmetic." The "interrelationships and sequence of numbers and processes" to be developed in the first three grades are charted. The chart is divided into three parts by grade, and each part is followed by a description of "curriculum procedures which explain and describe the chart content." Thus the teacher using the bulletin is given every assistance in understanding and carrying out the "Developmental Arithmetic Project" in her own classroom. Illustrative examples from the *Curriculum Procedures* at each age level follow:

Kindergarten

Concepts of adding to, taking away, and comparing contents are developed as the child

handles containers such as cups, glasses, boxes, jars, pails, etc., by filling (with water, sand, earth, etc.), by emptying, by putting part of contents in, by taking part of the contents out. gradually comes to use terms such as much, little, more, less heavier, lighter, whole, part, adding to, taking away, etc.¹⁵

First Grade

The child extends his ideas of numbers through 10 as he

¹⁴ Board of Education of the City of New York, *Curriculum Bulletin*, II, 1947-1948, p. vi.

¹⁵ Board of Education of the City of New York, *Curriculum Procedures*, p. 11.

uses pennies, nickels, or a dime in experience situations such as purchasing crackers and milk, paying for transportation on a trip, making contributions, etc.; recognizes differences among these coins and gradually learns their values.¹⁶

Second Grade

As he develops the meaning of 9 the child arranges 9 objects into three groups of three each; observes that the groups have the same number in each; refers to the groups as 3 and 3 and 3 and as three 3's.¹⁷

Third Grade

The child learns the meaning of adding and subtracting through 30 in graded steps:

- (a) one-place numbers within the first decade
- (b) a two-place number and a one-place number, within each of the second and third decades (records symbols from left to right)
- (c) one-place numbers, with bridging
- (d) a two-place number and a one-place number, with bridging (records symbols from left to right)
- (e) two two-place numbers, no exchange of tens or ones (*i.e.* no "carrying" or "borrowing"), adding or subtracting from right to left — ones, then tens, zeros regarded as place holders . . .¹⁸

In developing the above steps the child proceeds from the concrete through the abstract as follows:

(a) Adds to, takes away from, and recognizes differences between numbers in familiar situations such as purchasing articles in a class store or outside markets, collecting money for drives, comparing amounts, depositing or withdrawing money from a school bank, etc.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

(b) Manipulates objective materials in bundles or columns of tens and ones, adding to, taking away, and noting differences between groups of objects.

(c) Uses a device¹⁹ composed of ten rows of ten objects each (or three rows of ten objects each) for adding to and taking away. . . .

(d) Records the process of adding to, taking away, and recognizing differences in experience situations, by writing symbols in vertical form, sum or minuend not to exceed 30; gradually comes to use the terms plus, minus, equals.²⁰

During the school year 1946–1947, teachers in the New York City schools developed “experience situations,” numerical and nonnumerical, through which the mathematical aspects presented in Part I of the *Arithmetic Bulletin* were made meaningful. The following examples of experience situations representing age levels kindergarten through grade three are taken from the bulletin. As listed they are of two varieties, nonnumerical and numerical.

NONNUMERICAL EXPERIENCES

Social Situations

*Significance*²¹

Kindergarten and Grade I

<p>The teacher read a story about a wee little girl and a wee little boy seeking a wee little house in the forest. The children discussed Tom Thumb, elves, dwarfs, gremlins, little fingers, little houses, etc.</p>	<p>Children used the words tiny, little, wee, small in contrast to big and large. They came to recognize differences in sizes.</p>
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¹⁹ Abacus.

²⁰ Board of Education of the City of New York, *Curriculum Procedures*, p. 28.

²¹ For the learning of interrelationships and sequence of numbers and processes, from Board of Education of the City of New York, *Arithmetic Bulletin*, Part I, p. 34.

Second Grade

A class had seen a market. The children asked how the food came to the market and the length of time it took for the food to arrive. This led to a discussion of various means of transporting food — trucks, trains, airplanes. They talked about refrigeration, speed of various means of transportation, and the distances the various foods are transported.

The children extended their sense of distance, time, and indefinite quantity. They used the words fast, slow, far, near, long, short, many, few, and their comparative forms.

The children became interested in different modes of transporting food.²²

Third Grade

The children decided to make puppets. They used paper, cloth, cotton, and excelsior. They estimated the amounts of the various materials needed. They made puppets of different sizes.

Children used words such as large, small, larger, smaller, tall, short, top, bottom, up, down, middle, near, far, many, few, some, behind, etc.

Language arts, and arts and crafts experiences, were integrated.²³

NUMERICAL EXPERIENCES

*Social Situations**Significance**Kindergarten and Grade I*

The children wanted to send Easter cards to their parents. Each one saved enough money for the purchase of a card and a 3¢ stamp. They went to the Five and Ten Cent Store with their teacher to buy the cards. When they returned to school on April 14, the children described the reactions of their parents upon the receipt of the cards.

Understanding of the values of a dime, a nickel, and pennies through experience.

The children developed an interest in sending and receiving something through the mail.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Second Grade

The class planned to make necklaces with beads, small shells, and shellacked macaroni. Each child chose no more than 20 objects of varying sizes and shapes.

Size, shape, and space relationships were developed. Words used were round, square, small, large, medium.

Third Grade

A "Class Bazaar" had been arranged. The children brought used games and puzzles from home. The articles were carefully spaced on a table in order to make an effective display. A group of children went to the Five and Ten Cent Store to find out the prices of these articles when new. They lowered the prices because their games were secondhand. Invitations were sent to the children in the second, third, and fourth year classes to come to the bazaar. When certain games could not be sold, prices were lowered to attract buyers.

Children had a real occasion for using numbers up to 100. They learned how to judge their values. They also had an opportunity to write two-place numbers.

Size, shape, and space relationships were developed.

The children recognized a need for sales in stores.

The continuity and integration of experience in this arithmetic curriculum will be readily apparent to the student. The experiences, both numerical and nonnumerical, are rooted in the context of the child's normal living. Thus arithmetic plays its part in his exploration of his environment, both physical and social.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. List some experiences in the field of natural science which young children may have at home, and which, if clarified, are educationally valuable.

2. What may children gain from having pets at home? From caring for plants?
3. What considerations should be kept in mind when planning to bring pets into the classroom?
4. What experiences might be planned to teach first-grade children caution and control in connection with fire?
5. List a number of classroom situations at the kindergarten level which may be physically dangerous. Discuss how you would plan to develop caution rather than fear in each instance.
6. List a number of simple scientific experiments which would be interesting and informative at the third-grade level.
7. How might the development of better food habits be motivated in a first grade?
8. Give some suggestions as to how to approach the problem of helping a little girl come to school neatly and attractively dressed. Assume that the family income is very restricted, and that the child's untidiness is a social handicap to her in the school group.
9. List some concrete suggestions for the supervision of nursery school children in the use of outdoor play apparatus.
10. Of what value to the second- or third-grade child is the school garden? Can you offer any suggestions as to procedures which might help make this a rich experience for city children, keeping in mind the fact that school is generally closed during July and August?

CHAPTER VIII

Exploring the Social Environment

Individuality is not originally given but is created under the influences of associated life. . . .

Society means association, coming together in joint intercourse and action for the better realization of any form of experience which is augmented and confirmed by being shared.

JOHN DEWEY.¹

The newborn child is a person in embryo only. He is possessed solely of phylogenetic traits, his qualities are not those of John Smith but rather those of genus *homo*. Individuality develops through contact with others, through the baby's reactions to the stimuli of the social environment. When one considers the complete isolation of the neonatus — his immature sensory equipment and his complete helplessness — the process of socialization during the early months of his life seems amazingly rapid. The rapidity of the child's progress in social relationships is made possible through his sensitivity to persons, a sensitivity which Dr. Gesell has called a "generalized conditionability" distinguishing the human in-

¹ John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, pp. 198, 208.

fant from the young of any other species. By the time the child comes to nursery school at two or two-and-a-half he has developed a strong awareness of comfort and security when he is near his mother as well as affectionate ties to other members of his family. His infantile helplessness and his parents' eager responses to his needs have effectively changed his social isolation into social dependence. One of the important purposes of nursery school education is to decrease this dependence upon the family group and gradually to make him socially self-sustaining in a group of persons his own age.

THE NURSERY CHILD EXPLORES THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The junior nursery school entrant has still to learn the very rudiments of association with others. He is generally not ready for group play, but soon finds pleasure in playing near other children even though he does not play with them. This "parallel play" gradually accustoms him to a group situation. His early efforts to make contact with his peers are unpredictable: he hits, pinches, pulls hair, sometimes pokes an investigating finger into another's eye, as readily as he pats or hugs another child. Since the reactions of his victims are quite as unpredictable as are his advances, he learns but slowly. An aggressive "sock" calling forth only a mild response today may result in vigorous reprisals tomorrow, or the other way around. Gradually, with the guidance of the nursery school teacher, the youngster learns what other people his age will and won't take, more gradually still he learns what they like.

Conflicts over playthings are many, and progress from the "grab-snatch" method to the technique of sharing is correspondingly difficult. Awareness of another's purposes comes very gradually, and meantime quarrels are frequent. John knocks over Jimmy's pile of blocks with his fire truck, quite by accident. Jimmy responds by blows and angry cries. Or

Mary is trying to make up the doll's bed her particular way. Susan, trying to help, pulls the covers off. Mary flies at Susan and a first-rate fight is underway.

The social studies curriculum in the nursery school is first of all concerned with helping children develop basically important techniques of getting on together. The teacher's methods of guidance, based on her knowledge of child development, change as the children grow in their ability to resolve conflicts themselves. At first, the teacher of the youngest groups keeps conflicts at a minimum by reducing the situations which produce them. Enough trucks, dolls, carriages, and other favorite playthings are provided so that no one has to wait a turn for any length of time. Play materials are carefully arranged so that no one child can appropriate *all* the doll dishes, *all* the trucks, *all* the blocks if he comes to school early. Junior, arriving at 8:30, goes for the truck by the window. At 8:35, in comes Robert, also truck-minded. Robert spots Junior, and rushes for Junior's truck. The nursery school teacher quietly waylays him, and suggests the red fire truck over near the sandbox. Or Susan comes to school with a chip on her shoulder, and approaches another child with a gleam in her eye, all set for trouble on general principles. The teacher calls her attention to the finger paints, and offers to help Susan find an apron.

Gradually, as these children mature and grow accustomed to the group situation, as they grow in social awareness and independence, the teacher tries less to avoid quarrels than to help children learn ways of solving conflict situations. There is only one big red fire truck with removable ladders. If two children are playing cooperatively with it, and two others want it, last comers have to wait for turns or persuade the first two to let them join the truck play. The teacher helps the children see these possibilities and decide between them; she explains the purposes of one child to another, and encourages friendliness.

Methods of guiding children in quarrel situations vary

with the teacher's own social philosophy, and with the educational policies of the different schools. Fifteen years ago, when nursery schools were newer and procedures had been submitted to little if any analysis, differences in technique were very radical. When a three- or four-year-old tried to snatch a toy from another child some adults would say to the child attacked, "Hold on to it!" Others would end the quarrel by separating the children physically; still others gave elaborate explanations, frequently exacting specious apologies. Now that studies of children's quarrels and adult techniques of handling them have been subject to study and discussion,^{1a} the following conclusions are generally accepted as guiding principles for current practice.

1. Quarrel situations present important teaching opportunities, and should be thoughtfully and consistently met by the teacher.

2. A teacher's reaction to a quarrel in which, for instance, John walks up to Jimmy and snatches a toy away from him varies according to what she knows about the social development of the two boys. If John is one of the nursery school bullies, she is concerned. Evidently her efforts in the direction of helping John develop better techniques have so far failed. Probably she intervenes once more, explaining that Jimmy had the toy first, but would perhaps give it to John if politely asked to do so. On the other hand, if John has shown no aggressiveness and is usually not able to stand up for his own rights in the group, she might well ignore the incident so far as any intervention goes, secretly applauding John's evidence of initiative. In still another instance, when the incident was of no significance for either child, she might simply note it as a fact and watch the children involved to determine whether it was symptomatic of any important shift in the adjustment of either. The competent

^{1a} For example, the study by Madeleine Hunt Appel, "Aggressive Behavior of Nursery School Children and Adult Techniques of Guidance," *Journal of Experimental Education*, December, 1938.

teacher's handling of quarrels is not opportunistic, but based upon her understanding of, and intelligent plans for the guidance of, individual children.

3. The aggressive, quarrelsome child needs reassurance as much as or more than his victims do. Social disapproval following unpleasant behavior is destructive to personality unless the child is made to feel that he is accepted, even though his behavior is not. Such reassurance is the teacher's responsibility.

4. Diversion is a sound technique, especially with younger children. Strictly speaking, it is an ending technique rather than a teaching technique.²

5. Physical separation, with or without diversion, is sometimes necessary and effective. It is especially advisable when contestants are not well matched.

6. Explanations, if offered, should be brief and free from moralizing. Lengthy explanations fall upon deaf ears. "You hurt John." "It is Mary's turn to have the doll carriage. You may have it later." "John doesn't like to have his hair pulled." These are pertinent comments, within the child's comprehension.

7. Exaction of apologies is futile. Where there is no regret, polite speeches are insincere; being made to patter a meaningless form against one's will arouses resentment rather than good feeling.

8. The growth of a group of preschool children in their ability to resolve quarrels without adult intervention is a good test of the educational value of their social science experiences.

Nursery school children are enlarging their acquaintance with the social environment in ways other than mere association with children their own age. The group teacher and other teachers in the school, the director, the custodian, the housekeeper, and the cook all affect them and widen their

² Appel, *op. cit.*

range of social contacts. Going to and from school children may notice community stores, public buildings, parks, playgrounds. This experience will be reflected in their conversation; gradually it will find its way into their dramatic play. The skillful nursery school teacher develops this growing interest in their surroundings by entering into the conversation when opportunity offers, by putting up clear, simple, colorful pictures, attractively mounted and frequently changed. Now the picture of a country house, now a city street, now a grocery store, now children playing. Never very many pictures at a time, never any attempt to urge conversation about them. From time to time the teacher will provide more building blocks, of different sizes and shapes, and more materials for dramatic play, such as dishes and cooking utensils and house-keeping equipment, to meet the children's growing interests and needs.

Even the threes will enjoy a trip to the grocery store around the corner to buy a pumpkin for Halloween; the fours will be interested in many things about the store and will ply the storekeeper with questions. But on the whole in the nursery school excursions are few and properly limited to the very immediate neighborhood.

Community helpers — the policeman, the fireman, the man who cleans the street — occasionally come up in spontaneous conversation, appear in dramatic play, perhaps are pictured in drawings. Festivals, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, St. Valentine's Day, Easter, May Day may be properly celebrated. But for the nursery child proper celebrations are very simple, very briefly prepared for, and carefully insulated against overstimulation. School administrators, board members, and above all parents often need careful explanations and continual demonstration to prove that little children should never take part in organized entertainments for parties and festivals. The social life of the nursery baby must be planned for his happiness and general welfare, not for the amusement and pleasure of adults.

SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE KINDERGARTEN

"It is the particular function center of the social studies to explain how human beings may live well in relation to each other."³ In the nursery school this explanation is inseparable from the child's everyday experience in learning how to make the simplest, most rudimentary adjustments to the rights of others. The kindergarten child, if he has had nursery school experience, has already effected these basic adjustments and is ready to go on to a little bit more remote study and explanation of "how human beings may live well in relation to each other." Even if the five-year-old has not had previous group experience, he has reached an age of real sociability, and if he is not in one way or another a spoiled child he shows both interest and aptitude in developing wholesome, socially accepted attitudes and ways of behaving.

The social studies are the natural core of the curriculum in the kindergarten and early grades. They are the principal centers of interest around and about which literature, music, art, construction, and language are effectively integrated. For the kindergarten child the long, elaborate unit of work is out of place. According to good current authority, the social studies in the kindergarten should "consist of many short term units related to dominant centers of interest."⁴ Yet this important part of the curriculum must not be haphazard. The teacher should have a good, coherent plan in outline, the details of which she will fill in in response to the particular needs and interests of the individual children in any particular class. Quoting the Cincinnati *Manual*, once more,

There is a social aspect to almost every activity in which children engage. One experience leads to another; interests ebb and flow. Hence, there must be consistent and wise guidance which

³ Cincinnati Public Schools, *Primary Manual*, Curriculum Bulletin 95, p. 254.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

selects and directs those activities which will meet the needs of the group and have the greatest educative value.⁵

The social studies curriculum for the kindergarten and lower grades needs protection from two opposing dangers; on the one hand, lack of coherence and definite objectives resulting from too little formal planning; on the other hand, a reversion to the old dry-as-dust course of study in modern dress through a formal, stereotyped description of units or through the arbitrary assignment, by supervisory officers, of activities to be carried on in each grade. Either extreme may be fatal for real progress.

A first step in the planning of activities, and one which offends neither by being arbitrary nor by a tendency to vagueness, is the setting up of standards in the light of which units may be judged. Such standards have been admirably worked out in several of the newer books on nursery, kindergarten, and early grade teaching. They may be briefly summarized here.

1. A unit of work should be intrinsically interesting to boys and girls of the age and school grade for which it is intended.

2. The subject selected should give the children the opportunity and incentive to acquire socially desirable habits, attitudes, and information.

3. The subject should be well chosen with respect to the particular environment of the children who are to participate in it. For instance, a center of interest such as "Studying the Boats in the Harbor" may be well suited to an intelligent five-year-old group living on the seashore, who are naturally familiar with and interested in boats. It would be too difficult for a similar group of children in a midwestern town who perhaps had never seen a boat and to whom the whole business of navigation would be vague and unreal. The children in such a city as New Haven, Connecticut, could learn much about boats through observation and firsthand

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 260.

experience. Such firsthand experience is very important for younger pupils, who easily form inaccurate and bizarre conceptions as a result of verbal description. Of course pictures and other illustrative material can be made very helpful, but even these do not compare with actual, immediate experience.

4. When the successful carrying out of a unit depends upon having the children get information through reading, the reading matter should be easily obtainable and well suited to the children's reading capacity.

5. A further standard which seems applicable is that a unit of work in first and second grades may well be directed in such a way that the children have practice in the basic skills of oral expression, reading, and number. This standard is actually an extension of the second standard mentioned, that a good unit promotes the acquisition of socially desirable habits, attitudes, and information. The restatement seems advisable because many people seem to overlook the fact that reading and number are activities which are intrinsically interesting to children. To these people there appears to be an opposition between teaching the skills and carrying on interesting units of work. Such an opposition is apparent only.

6. As a final criterion, a good unit of work should lead on to other interesting activities.

The standards so far mentioned are general and apply to centers of interest in any grade. When one turns to the consideration of how to plan a specific unit, it becomes really difficult to be definite without becoming dogmatic. In the opinion of the present writer, teachers — especially the less experienced teachers — need to plan units rather definitely in advance, picturing imaginatively the course they will take but remaining flexible about this course until they are actually working their plans out with the children. It is for this reason that the suggestions for planning a unit which appear below are offered for the reader's consideration.

The form for the writing up of a center of interest or unit of work should be so framed that the result is clear and satisfying to the teacher carrying on the work, as well as meaningful to the reader, whether supervisory officer or student, who has not seen the activity in progress. Information as to the age, general intelligence, and social background of the children participating is especially needed in the latter case. The purpose of the activity and the time spent in carrying it out should be stated; the teacher's activities, the children's activities, the materials and equipment used should appear also. The information gained by the children should be clearly and honestly set forth. Suitable bibliographies for both teacher and children are an extremely valuable part of the record.

High-sounding objectives or outcomes should be avoided, or at least stated with care. We hope that children will develop a spirit of cooperation as a result of their group activities; we should like them to gain worthy leisure-time interests; but at the same time we know that only a tiny bit of progress in the general direction of these ideals is made by any one good teaching unit. Too much time and effort spent in formulating these fine, remote objectives, a too flowery description of outcomes in terms of character changes, tend to blind teachers to the plain, immediate ends which can be hoped for as the result of a few weeks' good teaching. In stating outcomes, especially, it is better to confine oneself to objective evidence rather than pious hopes. For instance, "Mary had no idea of 'taking turns' when the work began; at the end of this unit she was showing better cooperation by waiting for the hammer until another child had finished with it," states a fact; "Mary is much better adjusted socially" conveys a slight possibility.

The Cincinnati *Manual*⁶ suggests as well-chosen units for the kindergarten the following social studies subjects: A Playhouse; Festivals; May Baskets; Holidays. The Playhouse

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 261ff.

Unit is described in detail, and the description is organized under the following headings:

Initial Planning. (A statement of the teacher's purposes.)

Approaches. Possible means of initiating the unit, such as the presence of playhouse toys in the room, presence of a doll which becomes a baby in dramatic play, conversations about home activities and family relations and duties, a doll made by the teacher to set the stage, and various other natural starting points for a playhouse activity.

Activities for Carrying on the Unit. Activities relating to the problems arising in the course of constructing the playhouse—e.g. planning the house, deciding on kinds of rooms to be provided, deciding on furniture to put in the house, and other related questions.

Activities. Constructing the house, furnishing it with due consideration for comfort and beauty, preparing simple foods, creating rhythms, dramatic play, and other suitable activities.

Relation to Other Aspects of the Program. References to other sections of this manual, such as General Plan of the Program, Language Arts, Reading, Music, Art, Safety and Physical and Health Education, Science, and Arithmetic, clearly show the integration of subject matter areas with a unit of work.

Evaluation of the Unit. The following questions indicate criteria useful in determining how much the playhouse unit has contributed to the child's development.

Information and Concepts Gained. For example, Do the children understand that the members of a family work together and help each other to make a happy home? Do they recognize the importance of work and the specific responsibilities of every member of the family?

Skills Developed. For example, Do the children express themselves clearly? Do they use tools and equipment safely? Have they developed the habits of cleaning up after work and of putting equipment away in its proper place?

Attitudes Attained. Do the children appreciate the service of members of the family and community helpers? Are they cheerful in work and play? Do they use self-control in all situations? Do they think clearly and critically?

The following simple account of a kindergarten playhouse unit was contributed by a classroom teacher.

LEARNING ABOUT THE HOME AND FAMILY

Children of this age love to play house. The teacher planned to encourage their play with a view to realizing certain definite objectives. These were the following: to have the children learn how to take care of a playhouse; to wash, rinse, and hang up dolls' clothes; to wash and dry dishes; to use broom, mop, and dustpan correctly.

Accordingly, in the course of her own activities the teacher provided material for building a playhouse, and saw to it that dolls, dolls' clothes, dolls' dishes, and small-sized housekeeping and cleaning utensils were available. She showed the children how to use the utensils, how to wash clothes, and, in a few cases, how to iron. She made occasional suggestions to make the play more interesting.

The children first built a playhouse with the teacher's help. Then they played house. In the course of their play they swept and dusted and tidied up, they washed and dried clothes and dishes, they set the table, they decorated the house. A few children, under supervision, used a small electric iron. As a special activity they made applesauce and cooked some cereal.

The outcomes of the activity were the building of a satisfactory playhouse, the acquisition of some skill in keeping their playhouse clean and in order, and the acquisition of skill in keeping dolls' clothes clean. This last outcome might be questioned by the skeptical, and many would doubt the wisdom of letting children iron. Of course the ironing was done under close supervision, but it is an interesting fact that it is no longer necessary for the teacher to take the dolls' clothes home for laundering. The children do it all. It is certain that they played together more and more happily as the days went on, and equally certain that they enjoyed their doll play very much.

The materials provided were two large cartons, some strips of wood, saw, nails, hammers, materials for curtains, and the equipment for playing house mentioned above. The two large cartons were taken apart and nailed to a light wooden frame made by the children under the teacher's guidance.

Festivals are considered an "aspect of the social studies."⁷ Certainly the celebration of a festival is a satisfying culminating activity for a unit of work or center of interest. So far as actual content is concerned, "the symbolism, legends, and myths of festivals, when understood by the teacher and interpreted wisely and simply to the child, provide a meaningful background for the observance."⁸ The fact remains, however, that the symbolism, myths, and legends of festivals are frequently far from suitable literature for the young child, and that these in some instances arouse resentment in the homes of children whose families are unsympathetic with, or antagonistic to, this content. For this reason, it seems advisable to present certain of the more important festivals simply for the fun and good fellowship which they have come to represent, and not for the historical, artistic, or religious values for which they stand.

HOLIDAYS

The major holidays celebrated in kindergarten and primary classes throughout the year are Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and May Day. In some schools the patriotic holidays, Columbus Day, Washington's and Lincoln's birthday, Armistice Day, Flag Day, and Memorial Day are mentioned. These seem to have varying significance and value as centers of interest for the young child.

Halloween

In practice, many schools spend two weeks or more in preparation for a Halloween party in the kindergarten. Varied activities are provided for. The Jack-o'-lantern is the crowning attraction. Going out to buy a suitable pumpkin is great fun, and watching the teacher cut Jack-o'-lantern's face is fun, too. There are nice, humorous stories about pumpkins and Jack-o'-lanterns. The black cat motif is also

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 304f.

⁸ *Ibid.*

presented in many places; so are the witches upon their brooms. All this may be a pleasant enough experience, provided the "scare" element is ruled out, and also provided that the sort of buffoonery which results in chalked-up sidewalks, stolen door mats, deflated tires, and other minor and irritating destruction of property is not learned by young children from older ones. Actually, the social studies content of Halloween is very little or nothing. All-hallows Eve is not a concept rich in present-day value and significance for five-year olds. Roughhousing is not educationally valuable, either. It would therefore seem that preparation for the Halloween festival should be very brief, and that its intent should be pleasant, humorous, social enjoyment. A very few days should be sufficient to realize these values for the kindergarten child.

Thanksgiving

This holiday is rich in possibilities for children and adults. Preparation for Thanksgiving is naturally related to nature study and science activities carried on during the fall. Trips to the neighboring grocery store or the market are fine motivation for conversation, graphic expression, and work with plastics. Literature and music also offer enrichment of experience. The social studies content is universal in character, common to all races and people. Either Thanksgiving Festival or a kindergarten Harvest Home is well worth two weeks or more in anticipation of this culminating activity. The experience is rich in sensory enjoyment and correspondingly in aesthetic value for the little child. Beautiful colors, delightful odors, good food in the form of turkey and cranberry sauce and pumpkin pie and nuts and raisins, provide an experience which remains for a lifetime a symbol of pure delight. Reverent gratitude for the rewards of husbandry comes gradually, but rudimentary appreciation of the autumn harvest may be experienced even by the kindergarten child. As a festival, Thanksgiving presents one of the

best opportunities for the kindergarten to participate in a processional or ceremony for the entire school.

Christmas

In homes where Christmas has a religious and cultural significance it is the richest festival of all for the young child. But the teacher must bear in mind that in many other homes this festival is not celebrated, and that many of its symbols and much of its pageantry are taboo, at least to the older generation, in many families. True, a festival of light, celebrated at the yuletide or "turning tide" of the year when the sun moves northward and the days begin to lengthen, is almost universal. The Jewish Chanukah, or Feast of Lights, for instance, is celebrated at about the same time as Christmas. But the heritage of story, legend, and history surrounding the season differs greatly between the Jewish and the Christian home. The wise teacher studies these traditions, and when appropriate combines them in school situations where joint festivities may further mutual understanding and genuine sympathy. Many public school situations admit only a very general treatment of the cultural traditions associated with Christmas, and therefore the fun aspect of jolly old St. Nicholas and his eight reindeer, the pleasure of singing gay songs, the giving of gifts and their eager receiving, should represent the whole content of the experience. Since this is the case, preparation for Christmas may well be shortened to a week and a half or two weeks. The gifts made by kindergarten children should be so simple that this time allotment is generous for their completion.

Easter

The Easter bunny and his whimsies represent the fun content of Easter. In some parts of the country the bunny is not sufficiently familiar to warrant celebration in school, and it is therefore best to consider coloring eggs and making attractive baskets simply a small part of the spring activities

which culminate with the May Day celebration. Like the Thanksgiving season, spring is full of delightful possibilities and centers of interest develop spontaneously, one growing out of the other. The very sight of spring flowers suggests graphic expression. The planting of real seeds, the dramatization of the gardener's work, the Maypole dance, effect a natural integration of social studies, science, and expressional activities. Meanwhile, the children have had more than half a year of living and playing together and the group situation should be at its best. If the teacher can but restrain herself from formalizing the program by teaching a dance or directing rhythms so that childish spontaneity is destroyed, the spring program may be a splendid demonstration of the integrated curriculum at its best.

The Patriotic Holidays

Columbus Day, Washington's Birthday, Lincoln's Birthday, and Armistice Day have little significance for the kindergarten child and may well be passed by with the briefest mention. Flag Day, if the ceremonies are kept very simple, is an appropriate celebration. The proper care of a flag, the way to carry the flag, appreciation of our flag as a precious symbol may be taught through practice which is enjoyed for its own sake.

St. Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day

A lesser holiday such as St. Valentine's Day or St. Patrick's Day may have considerable local significance. St. Valentine's Day is appropriately celebrated through making pretty valentines of many varieties, an activity well within the kindergarten child's power. They may be sent to the friends of the child's own choosing, or they may be placed in a kindergarten room mailbox. The possibilities of St. Valentine's Day for motivating a study of the postal system are apparent, but this study is much more rewarding if carried on by a first- or second-grade class.

SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE FIRST GRADE

The first-grade child is capable of sustaining interest in units somewhat longer than those recommended for the kindergarten, but in his case, also, reasonable brevity is important. Units suggested in modern courses of study concern the home, the school, and the immediate neighborhood. They consist of "activities which will develop and broaden the children's understanding of human relationships and of the interdependence of individuals and groups."⁹ *The Catholic University Course of Study* suggests the following activities as valuable for first-grade pupils.

Dramatizing the activities of helpers who come to the home.

Making a frieze to illustrate the ways in which these men help us.

Interviewing the helpers about their work; reporting to the class.

Composing and reading stories about family helpers.

Singing songs about the postman, milkman, paper boy, and others.

Making a trip to the neighborhood grocery store.

Building a store in the classroom.

Planning and constructing it; working in groups or committees.

Collecting articles; modeling fruits and vegetables.

Determining prices of goods and making signs and labels.

Making posters to advertise goods.

Arranging goods attractively; keeping store neat and clean.

Dramatizing buying and selling; showing courtesy to clerks and customers.

Reading about family helpers in *These Are Our Friends*.¹⁰

The Cincinnati *Manual* recommends similar content, and includes a study of toys. An illustrative unit presented in the *Manual* is concerned with "Farm Friends." It is briefly out-

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 264f.

¹⁰ Ginn, *These Are Our Friends*.

lined here to illustrate its greater complexity and richness of informational detail in comparison with the kindergarten unit.

FARM FRIENDS

(I) Initial Planning

Major objectives

To develop an unselfish interest in and love for animals.

To learn some facts about domestic animals.

To develop an appreciation of the farmer's work in caring for animals.

To arouse appreciation of the services of the farmer and his animals to the home.

To develop interest in farm life and realization of our dependence upon it.

(II) Essential Meanings

Basic Concepts¹¹

The farmer is very kind to his animals.

Pets and farm animals depend on people for care and protection.

Animals need good food and clean homes.

People depend on animals and plants for food, clothing, shelter.

All life comes from life and tends to produce its own kind.

(Baby animals are like their mothers.)

Information

Animals found on a farm (horses, cows, sheep, pigs, cats, dogs, goats, chickens, ducks, turkeys, geese).

Foods animals eat.

Things animals give us.

Where animals stay (e.g., cow — pasture in summer, stable in winter).

How animals protect themselves from cold weather.

Animal families. (Baby animals are like their mothers, but have different names, e.g., cow, calf.)

How animals talk. (Cows moo, horses neigh.)

What the farmer does for the animals.

¹¹ Abbreviated list.

The farmer's work from season to season: spring and summer, plowing, cultivating, planting, marketing; fall, gathering crops, storing, marketing.

Skills (Illustrative examples)

Intelligent observation of farm animals.

Clear and correct self-expression.

Ability to conduct self in accordance with group demands.

Attitudes (Illustrative examples)

Appreciation of man's dependence upon others.

Respect for farm life and the work of the farmer.

Approaches (Illustrative examples)

Displays of books and pictures.

Stories and poems about farm animals.

Discussion of sources of food for the school lunch.

(III) Activities for the Unit

Making clay, papier-mâché, and wooden animals.

Making fruits and vegetables.

Making a frieze.

Making a movie.

Making butter; making jelly, popping corn.

Planting a garden or window box.

(IV) Relation to Other Fields

Language Arts

Oral Language (Example): Telling about experiences on a farm.

Written Language: writing a letter to the farmer to ask permission to visit his farm, writing a letter to thank him, making labels for pictures on bulletin board.

Number

Understanding money values (cost of bus fare to farm and back).

Handling money (bus fares).

Physical and Health Education

Discussing need for cleanliness in caring for animals and products.

Comparing health needs of baby animals with those of young children.

Safety

Learning which animals make safe pets.

Learning the dangers of bites and scratches.

Science

Gardening in schoolyards or classroom.

Providing healthful environment for classroom pets.

Music

Singing songs about animals, farmers, the out-of-doors.

Arts

Modeling, painting, illustrating.

Evaluation

Have the children gained in courtesy and respect for the rights of others?

Have they increased their knowledge beyond the limits of the home and school?

Have they an appreciation of animals and their services to man?

Have they a consciousness of membership in social groups?

Have they acquired new information, meanings, and vocabulary about the farm? ¹²

FESTIVALS IN THE FIRST GRADE

Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, and May Day are vital centers of interest for the first grade as for the kindergarten. Much the same considerations hold in selecting appropriate festival programs for both age levels. According to Gesell and Ilg, however, it is well to bear in mind that six-years-old loves parties, but is singularly unequal to bearing them with poise. A six-year-old party is a hullabaloo at best, and the wise teacher plans accordingly.

SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE SECOND GRADE

The second-grade child is ready to extend his study of the community further. He is socialized to a degree that makes trips and excursions to gather firsthand information less haz-

¹² Cincinnati Public Schools, *op. cit.*, pp. 275ff.

ardous and more rewarding than in the case of the younger child. He is beginning to read and write, and with the help of his teacher he can record his experiences on charts. *The Catholic University of America Course of Study* suggests "Learning How We live Together in Our Neighborhood" as a general theme for the grade. Suggested units of work are:

Making a study tour through the neighborhood to observe people at work in the residential and business sections.

Making a map to show the extent of our neighborhood, its business section and library, the parish church and school, and our own homes

Collecting photographs of neighborhood buildings for "Our Neighborhood Book"; writing short descriptions under the pictures.

Making a mural to illustrate how people live and work together in the neighborhood.

Writing stories about neighborhood workers and neighborhood living.

"Learning How the Larger Community Helps our Neighborhood" is a closely related center of interest, in the course of which the following activities may be carried on:

Listing the laws which children must obey in the neighborhood; illustrating the observance of these laws.

Inviting the policeman and fireman to tell how they help us and how we can cooperate with them.

Listing evidence of community health and safety, such as traffic signs, fire hydrants, and quarantine signs.

Visiting the community or branch post office to see how the mail is handled.

Setting up a post office in the classroom and dramatizing the post office activities; making mailbags and mailboxes for rural delivery; explaining to guests the work done in the post office.

Making a mural to show how a letter travels from the school to some distant point.

Visiting the public library to learn about the facilities and to borrow books; reporting on the activities in the library; discussing library rules.

Setting up a library in the classroom, making or providing furnishings, bringing personal books for other children to read, arranging a system for lending and checking books, making rules for the use of the library, arranging books neatly and attractively, making and illustrating booklets, and designing posters and book jackets.

Inviting the public librarian to visit the classroom and to tell stories in the group.

Inviting another class to participate in a story hour or book club.

Borrowing books from a traveling library (in rural communities).

The *Cincinnati Manual* also develops a study of the community on the second-grade level. Suggested units are concerned with Community Helpers, Transportation of People and Things, Food, Gardening, Festivals, The Circus.

SOCIAL STUDIES IN THE THIRD GRADE

The third-grade child is prepared to go yet farther afield. His interest, we read in the *Cincinnati Manual*, "should be directed toward an understanding of an expanded community life and the influence of climate and natural forces upon man's mode of life."¹³ According to the *Catholic University of America Course of Study*,

In the third grade the child extends his study of the immediate environment to include the larger community. He learns how people in this sphere live together and help one another, particularly in their work to obtain food, shelter, and clothing. This idea of interdependence in the community is extended also to the physical environment, as the child sees how we depend upon soil and water, plants and animals, forests and other natural resources to supply our needs.¹⁴

The *Cincinnati Manual* suggests the following appropriate themes: The Study of Clothing; Adaptation of Man to Environmental Forces; Communication; Zoo Animals; History

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

¹⁴ Catholic University of America, *Course of Study*.

of Our Holidays; Hobbies; A Bank; Play in Our Country.

Through these units, which are fairly representative of third-grade social studies content in the progressive schools of our country, the child approaches the study of history easily and naturally, since the unfamiliar, storied past is approached through the familiar and concrete present. As he studies clothing, he learns that ways of making clothing have changed from generation to generation, and that styles are affected by climate as well as by aesthetic preferences. As he studies the adaptation of man to environmental forces, he is introduced to the life of the Indian who once inhabited the land on which the child's home, his school, and familiar community buildings now stand. The zoo animals take him to the far corners of the earth to study their native habitats. Holidays, delightful experiences so far known to the child through joyful celebration only, take on new meaning as he studies their history. Mere parties are replaced or supplemented by pageants, the preparation of which motivates many units of work rich in possibilities for the integration of the curriculum — art, music, the language arts, literature — of these pageants are made. Science and arithmetic also make their less obvious but valuable contributions. Lovely colors, for instance, may be obtained through skillful dyeing, light effects and sound effects are important, costumes and scenery call for measuring, planning, and economical purchasing.

The Cincinnati *Manual* develops two units at this level in detail ¹⁵ — “A Study of Clothing” and “Adaptation of Man to Environment: Early American Indians.” Both are organized as are the units suggested for younger children. The outlines include Initial Planning (Major Objectives, Essential Meanings to be Developed, Approaches); Activities for the Unit: Relation to Other Fields (Language Arts, Arithmetic, Science, Music, Physical Education, Safety, Health, Art); Evaluation. Each unit is developed very fully, and the intent

¹⁵ Cincinnati Public Schools, *op. cit.*, pp. 292f.

is to offer many suggestions from which teachers may select those appropriate for their classes. Only the evaluation suggestions for these two units follow, since they are both so rich in possibilities that their development in any third-grade group will be both natural and interesting as a teaching program. For the unit on clothing,

Do the children dress more appropriately?

Do they dress for the weather?

Do they understand the importance of caring properly for their clothes?

Do they know significant facts concerning the sources and manufacture of clothing?

Do they appreciate the effort and skill that have gone into the making of clothing?

Do they realize that finished garments are the result of cooperation among many types of workers?

The unit on the Adaptation of Man to Environment is evaluated by the following questions:

Do the children understand the importance of environment to man's way of life?

Do they show interest in the lives of people outside their own group?

Do they have adequate information concerning the life of the Indian?

Do they appreciate the Indian's feeling for art and music?

Do they want to learn more about the early history of our country?

Do they understand how to use books in order to find information?

Do they show improvement in muscular coordination?

Do they give evidence of increased ability to express their ideas in speech and writing?

The emphasis throughout the study, according to the *Manual*, "should be placed on the way in which a simple people adjusted to simple surroundings and the way in which

their civilization was influenced by climatic and other environmental factors.”¹⁶ It is recommended that more than one type of Indian life be studied, “lest the children confuse adaptation with conformity to one particular set of living conditions.” It is also important to acquaint the class with the living conditions of contemporary Indians, building upon any direct experience they may have had with Indian people.

The rich content of experience which this unit represents makes it a universal favorite with primary teachers; students of early childhood education in our colleges in many instances remember their own study of Indian life in the primary school as among their most vivid and interesting school activities.¹⁷

Thus the social studies curriculum, beginning in the everyday experiences of the nursery baby, broadens to include a firsthand study of familiar community activities and services. By the end of the third grade this curriculum has broadened and deepened to include the study of a primitive culture, through direct experience whenever possible, but also through museum study and library research. The richness of the project in content and variety of experience will vary with the intellectual caliber of the children taking part in it, and with the imagination and scholarship of the individual teacher. In any event, possibilities for integration with other curricular areas are apparent in any social science unit, since such may hardly be carried on without making use of the fine and industrial arts, the language arts, and literature.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are some of the rudimentary social learnings you would expect to find developing in a three-year-old group? A four-year-old group?

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

¹⁷ The Cincinnati *Manual* includes excellent bibliographies for both teachers and children.

2. In what specific ways may the kindergarten teacher seek to develop social concepts?
3. Under what circumstances should an adult intervene in children's quarrels at the three-year-old level? The five-year-old level? Is such intervention part of the curriculum? What forms may the intervention take at each of these levels?
4. The kindergarten teacher is planning to take her group to visit a large toy store at Christmas time. What preparations should she make beforehand?
5. Plan a trip to an ice-cream plant with a third grade. How would you test the outcomes of this experience?
6. You are required to put on an assembly program with your first grade. The time of year is April. Suggest some suitable subjects for such a program, and indicate how you would prepare to present one of them.
7. List a number of social science activities which you think high in child interest value for the second- and third-grade levels, and also valuable in content.
8. In an integrated curriculum the field of social studies generally receives major emphasis. What possible dangers can you see in this, and what suggestions can you offer toward overcoming them?
9. List some of the ways in which group living in the third grade, in a democratic school situation, may contribute to the development of social concepts.
10. Discuss the role of the teacher in guiding group discussions with seven- and eight-year-old children. Do you think parliamentary procedure should enter in at this age level?

CHAPTER IX

The Technique of Reading

I mention'ed different Ways of Breeding,
Begin We with our Children's Reading.
To Master John the English Maid
A Horn Book gives of Ginger-bread;
And that the Child may learn the better,
As he can name, he eats the letter;
Proceeding thus with Vast Delight,
He spells, and gnaws from Left to Right.

MATTHEW PRIOR ¹

The ability to read is pivotal in the social and political life of civilized man; the importance of reading thus extends far beyond the walls of the academic institutions charged with teaching this basic skill. For this reason, the need to teach the people to read, as well as the dangers of permitting the people's reading, have been the subjects of philosophical and political discussions throughout the recorded history of education.

In time past, in fact in time and place no more remote than nineteenth-century America, pedagogues were enjoined to teach reading for two all-important purposes: to help save men's souls through enabling them to read the Scriptures

¹ Matthew Prior, "Alma," Canto II. Quoted by Nila B. Smith in *American Reading Instruction*, p. 7.

wherein salvation lay, and to make the same men competent and law-abiding citizens. With such important ends at stake, there is small wonder that the teacher's mind was more often on the goal than on the child. The "English Maid" in the poem who gave "Master John" a hornbook of gingerbread was centuries ahead of her time. She certainly understood the principle of motivation, valued the appeal to the senses, and had the good judgment to see that one of the young child's difficulties in learning to read is learning to move his eyes from left to right! Unfortunately she would have been a rarity among teachers of primary reading until quite recent years. And to many children reading remained the "scourge of infancy" as a result. Their interests and their abilities were generally ignored until the end of the last century, and then improvement came but slowly: first in the form of better motivation, then in the form of systematically planned methods. Finally, in this our day, reading instruction has been vastly improved and children's interests have actually been capitalized to make study a gratifying and satisfying experience. These changes have been brought about through a careful analysis of the reading process and its difficulties and an equally careful and scientific study of the abilities of young school pupils. However, that there is even yet room for improvement those who have contributed the most to the teaching of reading are the first to admit.

In the new edition of his book, *The Improvement of Reading*, Dr. Arthur Gates says:

Reading is both the most important and the most troublesome subject in the school curriculum. It is most important since it is a tool the mastery of which is essential to the mastery of nearly every other school subject. It is most troublesome since pupils fail in reading far more frequently than in any other elementary skill.²

While acknowledging the wide variety of factors which

² Arthur I. Gates, *The Improvement of Reading*, 3d ed., p. 1, copyright 1947, by Arthur I. Gates. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

may hamper pupils in learning to read, Gates puts the responsibility for recognizing and so far as possible controlling these factors squarely upon the school. Quoting him once more, "Most difficulties, ranging from the least to the most serious, are believed by the writer to be due primarily to the failures of the pupil to acquire techniques that might have been acquired had the right guidance and instruction been given at the right time."³

According to one of our top authorities, therefore, the reduction of reading failures in our schools depends to a great extent upon the improvement of guidance and instructional procedures. Such improvement in turn depends first of all upon progress in understanding the child's problems in connection with learning to read; second upon further study by teachers of the reading process itself; and third, Dr. Gates implies, upon improved administrative practices, including the reduction of the size of reading classes and the general improvement of instructional conditions.

The teaching of reading, including the diagnosis of difficulties and the use of suitable remedial measures, is a specialized technique the background for which covers a wide field of study. In the present limited discussion it is possible only to include salient facts about the development of reading ability and to explain the organization of the modern reading program in terms of these facts.

The development of reading ability is not, as was once assumed, a sudden phenomenon occurring around the beginning of the seventh year, but rather a slow process starting in babyhood. An intelligent approach to the problem of teaching children to read therefore requires careful study of the very little child's pre-reading experiences as well as of the school child's reading problems.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF READING READINESS

Gertrude Hildreth writes, "... there are varied aspects of readiness — of physical development, emotional maturity,

³ *Ibid.*, p. 14. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

social adjustment, maturation of muscular, and sensory, and perceptual abilities — all of which are important in initial school success.”⁴ Research studies seem to show that on the whole the limits and rate of these developmental processes are fixed by native capacity, but that complete fruition of this capacity is either furthered or retarded by environmental conditions. So it is obvious that the growth of reading readiness may be materially affected by the child’s home environment, and it is also apparent that the nursery school both can and does contribute substantially to the growth and development of traits essential to success in learning to read. And unless readiness is present, response to any sort of formal teaching cannot be successful. Quoting Hildreth again,

Experiments with young children demonstrate the wastefulness of teaching immature and unready subjects. The child suffers as much from precocious stimulation to learning as he suffers physically from an adult diet. Learning cannot be forced with any permanent and beneficial effects. The unready pupils are those who have not reached the point where they can profit from the instruction given.⁵

Developing Reading Readiness in the Nursery School

The nursery school offers children a variety of opportunities to develop motor skills and to intensify through use the sensory and perceptual abilities basic to reading readiness. Furthermore, even in the junior nursery groups children have the experience of sharing adult attention rather than monopolizing it, and of practicing the give and take of social relationship with people their own age. Heretofore social immaturity, lack of ease in the school situation, has been a fertile source of school failure in early childhood. Four-year-olds give themselves considerable practice in listening in groups, rather than singly, to stories and explanations, to records, and to the piano. Many opportunities are

⁴ Gertrude Hildreth, *Learning the Three R's*, p. 302.

⁵ *Ibid.*

afforded them to respond rhythmically, and to sing while at school. Books are an important part of the nursery school environment, indestructible picture books for the two-year-olds, illustrated story books for threes and fours. Threes occasionally and fours frequently gather around the teacher to look at the pictures as she reads to them; they learn to turn pages at the proper time. So incidentally they learn that books are fun, the source of stories; they begin to "read" stories from pictures. Experiences with block building, easel painting, clay, and finger painting develop interest and skill in expression through a variety of media. These varied activities are obviously contributing to the basic motor, perceptual, and social maturities essential to reading readiness.

Developing Readiness for Reading in the Kindergarten

The kindergarten program continues and broadens the pre-reading activities described for the nursery school, and in some schools introduces the use of printed symbols such as captions and signs as part of the class environment. The Cincinnati *Manual* suggests that "Emphasis should be placed on the meaning that the sign conveys, not on the words." Printed symbols are functional and purposeful when used for:

- Child's name on his work
- Labels on equipment, boxes, chairs, shelves
- Captions under pictures
- Signs in connection with activities ⁶

An attractive library table, or shelves nicely arranged, invite looking at books and encourage the care of them. The kindergarten teacher helps the children develop good habits and attitudes directly relating to reading by encouraging them to:

- Have clean hands
- Hold books correctly

⁶ Cincinnati Public Schools, *Primary Manual*, p. 167.

Turn pages correctly
Start at front of book
Read from left to right on the page
Read from top to bottom of a page
Become interested in printed words⁷

The kindergarten teacher further institutes a planned program designed to develop good work habits, to increase vocabulary systematically, to give practice in auditory discrimination, to give practice in visual discrimination, and to train the children in problematic thinking.

1. The good *work habits* suggested by the *Manual* include:

Respect for the rights of others would be shown by practicing consideration in sharing materials and space, being careful not to disturb others at their work by loud laughter and conversation, developing standards of right conduct during work periods.

Appreciation of a time schedule, realizing that certain activities take place at stated, definite times.

Ability to work independently for increasingly longer periods of time.

Neatness and economy in the use of materials.

Ability to complete a piece of work satisfactory for the pupil's level of maturity.

The degree of socialization and self-control represented by the possession of these work habits should be developed prior to the beginning of a formal reading program.

2. The *systematic increase of vocabulary* is undertaken in kindergarten through creating situations in which the children will learn to use new words — talking about pictures, toys, stories, natural objects, composing group letters and stories, making rules, making plans for parties. It is well for the teacher to become acquainted with the vocabulary of the preprimers and primers later to be used by the children so that she may provide the background necessary for understanding these words.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

3. *Auditory discrimination* may be developed through a variety of plays and games.

4. *Visual discrimination* is encouraged through play with picture puzzles, matching games, sorting and assembling blocks, beads, and other equipment and through color matching.

5. *Training in problematic thinking*, very important for reading readiness, is consciously developed by a competent kindergarten teacher through the various problem situations arising naturally in the course of constructive activities, natural science study, and the development of units of work in the area of the social studies.

The kindergarten teacher may estimate the success of her pre-reading program through studying the following questions:

Have the children developed an adequate conceptual background to enable them to get meaning from reading material?

Can they do satisfactory problematic thinking?

Do they speak clearly, freely, using an adequate vocabulary and simple sentence structure?

Are they able to relate and follow a series of ideas?

This account of the kindergarten pre-reading program follows the Cincinnati *Manual* rather closely and is representative of the program usually recommended in progressive school systems. There are, however, individual variations among schools and systems. In New York City, for instance, any use of captions, signs, or other printed symbols in the kindergarten is discouraged. But all are agreed on the basic educational principle which holds that the kindergarten teacher has a share in the responsibility for the whole reading program of the school, even though her children may never have their attention called to a printed word in the course of their kindergarten attendance.

The Reading Readiness Program in the First Grade

Until recently first-grade work was practically synonymous with learning to read. The first grade teacher taught read-

ing, the children learned to read, "or else." A teacher who failed to teach at least a very large percentage of her six-year-olds this basic skill was a failure as a first-grade teacher. The children who did not learn were "left back" at the end of the year; and this disheartening failure of promotion spoiled many a child's whole school career. A gradual realization that learning to read is properly an individual matter rather than a mass undertaking, a growing appreciation of the significance of individual differences in intelligence, health, and emotional stability in determining reading ability, and above all a comprehension of the importance of the mental age factor in reading readiness, have finally begun to change this dark picture. The need for a Reading Readiness Program for a longer or shorter part of the first-grade year in the case of a fair proportion of first-grade entrants is now generally conceded. Sometimes this reading readiness program is carried on in special pre-reading classes; elsewhere it is a recognized part of every first-grade curriculum. The following aims are appropriate to both situations:

To help the children adjust to the school and its program.

To preserve and improve the physical and mental health of the children by providing plenty of play activity both indoors and out, adequate relaxation, and a nicely served midmorning lunch.

To enrich the children's background of experience by stories, excursions, collections, and visual aids.

To stimulate an interest in reading.

To furnish certain kinds of information and develop certain special skills needed in the process.⁸

The classroom should be attractive, informal, and so arranged as to encourage working and playing together. Play materials should be plentiful and varied, to encourage different sorts of interest. There should be a comfortable, ade-

⁸ See *ibid.*, p. 170.

quate, attractive library corner well stocked with colorful books. Signs, captions, labels, and carefully planned, good-looking charts should be prominent in the environment. Even when the classroom is of an old-fashioned type with some or all the desks and seats stationary, the teacher can do a great deal to brighten it and give it a more social atmosphere if she uses her imagination and ingenuity.

It is well to divide the class into groups after a preliminary period of observation during which the teacher studies the social adjustments of her pupils. The grouping should be mainly on the basis of social maturity, to begin with. As the children progress in readiness for reading, more permanent groups based on specific pre-reading skills may be formed. Small groups are best, because they permit the teacher to give the individual attention so necessary in an adequate pre-reading program.

The day's program in a pre-reading class is not essentially different from that of a reading class. Both should make ample provision for outdoor play, luncheon, and resting time. The pre-reading program should be well integrated with the other daily activities, especially with the children's social studies and natural science interests. Language activities are naturally related to reading ability; the language program, including conversation, picture study, storytelling, dramatization, reporting, and a certain amount of memorizing and reciting are therefore important in a pre-reading class. Habits of correct speech and good English usage affect reading readiness quite directly and therefore require careful attention in this connection as well as in their own right.

In addition to these more or less indirect approaches to readiness for reading, "Many of the specific skills required in reading are among the traits which are susceptible to training."⁹ The skills and aptitudes in which the teacher of a pre-reading class is especially interested are:

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

Enunciation and pronunciation
 Auditory discrimination
 Visual discrimination
 Motor control
 Clear thinking
 Directional sense
 Correct use of books
 Awareness of printed symbols ¹⁰

ENUNCIATION AND PRONUNCIATION

A fourth-grade pupil, (therefore a "primary school graduate") asked his teacher, "How do you spell useter?" "Useter?" responded the teacher in surprise. "Yes. You know. You useter do it." The boy, by no means stupid, had reached the fourth year of school without pronouncing "used to" correctly. This is only one bona fide illustration of the results of carelessness about enunciation and pronunciation.

The Cincinnati *Manual* says, "All children should be helped to pronounce words distinctly and correctly. Individual help should be given to children who run syllables together, who fail to pronounce final syllables, who mispronounce k, s, and so forth, and who still use other forms of baby talk." ¹¹ The need for reasonably small classes to enable the teacher to give help of this kind is apparent. The *Manual* suggests that in order to improve enunciation and pronunciation among her pupils the teacher should:

Talk slowly and distinctly
 Let the children imitate calls and sounds made by animals
 Let the children with special difficulty watch the teacher's lips
 Explain directly, if necessary, how to make the correct sound
 Enlist the cooperation of the parents ¹²

Auditory Discrimination

It is possible to help children learn to hear similarities and differences in sounds. "This ability can and should be

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

strengthened through games and natural play activities."

Kindergarten games such as "Who Comes Knocking at My Door? Loud and Soft," are one method. Listening for similarities and differences in the sounds of words, distinguishing intensity and pitch of sound, represents another. "Whose name begins with the same sound as Mary's?" "Listen for the word that does not begin with M" and like activities are useful.

Visual Discrimination

Visual discrimination may be improved through interesting the children in likenesses and differences in colors, shapes, and sizes. Their play projects provide plenty of opportunity for the development of this kind of interest. The following planned activities may be used in addition:

Play with form boards, peg boards, beads, designs, as was recommended at the kindergarten level.

Studying and comparing pictures in reading readiness books; making similar studies in firsthand situations (comparing houses actually seen from window or on excursion; comparing toys).

Recognizing the various labels used in the classroom, recognizing captions under pictures, recognizing own name and friends' names.

Playing various matching games.

Recognizing differences in common objects — i.e., two coats, and how they differ.

Flashing pictures, and later words, by a device known as a "flashmeter" is another means of focusing attention, developing alertness, and quickening perception of detail.¹⁸

Motor Control

The precise oculo-motor control required in reading is dependent on normal progress in motor development. Such development is encouraged and furthered by participating in rhythmical activities, using large blocks, putting on wraps, and helping in the care of the room, which should develop

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

large muscle coordination. Bouncing balls, spinning tops, hammering, watering flowers, carrying paints, washing and ironing dolls' clothes, all aid in developing fine muscle coordination.

Oculo-motor coordination is directly developed through tracing, cutting, and coloring, motivated by an interesting unit of work.

Clear Thinking

All classroom activities should help in developing the ability to think clearly. Collecting and grouping facts according to a definite plan, selecting and organizing ideas, classifying and organizing items into groups (toys, animals, foods), seeing relationships, (cup and saucer, hammer and nails, knife and fork) should grow out of a well-planned school program. Practice in story telling, recalling events in sequence, and following simple oral instructions is afforded in any well-planned lower grade program.

Directional Sense

Proceeding from left to right, like Master John when he spelled and gnawed from left to right, should be encouraged and underscored by the teacher in her own performances of writing, drawing, and erasing; in addition the children may be given practice in "finding pictured objects which are upside down; noting pictures or objects which are going in the same direction; noting pictures or objects going in the wrong direction; using a marker correctly to pick up the next line."¹⁴

Children in pre-reading groups may also be provided with practice in the correct way to handle and care for books, learning how to open a book, turn the pages, and support the stiff-backed covers properly, using clean hands in all of these processes. They should also learn the use of bookmarks and the neat arrangement of books on a library table.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

In evaluating the success of a pre-reading program in the first grade, the following specific questions should be added to the more general evaluation of the kindergarten teacher:

Is the child emotionally and socially adapted to the school?

Is he physically able to cope with school work?

Has he good work habits?

Can he understand and follow simple directions?

Is he reasonably accurate in making visual and auditory discriminations?

Does he know how to handle books?

Does he know that printed symbols have meaning as a source of information and pleasure?

Does he show an increasing interest in books? ¹⁵

If these questions can be answered affirmatively, the actual reading program may be begun.

During the pre-reading period the teacher keeps careful record of each child's progress. These records provide a basis for grouping the children for their reading activities. Satisfactory individual records include physical reports, the results of psychological examinations, records of achievement in the use of reading readiness books and in the development of specific skills, and some anecdotal accounts relating to social maturity and reading interests.

THE BEGINNING READING PERIOD

This period is defined by Gates as "... the period in which the pupil undertakes definitely to recognize words and read sentences. The crucial matter at this period is whether the pupil can observe and study words with sufficient skill to enable him to recognize them later speedily and accurately enough to get the meaning of a sentence."¹⁶ The teacher's principal aim is to help the pupils build a sight vocabulary adequate for reading primer stories. Each new word should

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁶ Gates, *op. cit.*, p. 27. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

be carefully presented in various contexts, so that the reading of stories is easy and fluent from the first. Some children develop skill in "context guessing" almost immediately. This should be encouraged, but carefully watched lest guessing from meaning develop into careless reading. Sound procedure at this stage is to take the children through primer material rapidly enough to sustain interest, but not so rapidly that they fail to fix a basic vocabulary in their minds. The excellent primers now on the market are carefully planned to provide adequate repetition of a very limited number of words, thus relieving the teacher of this measure of responsibility for planning her work. Each primer story should be prepared for, however, and supplemented and reviewed by the use of the same vocabulary in blackboard work, chart reading, labels, captions, and varieties of seat work.

Growing independence in word recognition is the best indication that the beginning pupil is actually learning to read. It is indeed crucial that "he observe and study words with sufficient skill to enable him to recognize them later." Teaching beginners how to attack new words constitutes a delicate problem in method, for undue emphasis on word analysis may detract from getting the meaning of what is read. A survey of the highly interesting work in the field of reading in the last thirty years or so will reveal that the problem of combining a thorough, careful, analytic attack on word recognition with the ease and rapidity which are so essential for fluent, enjoyable reading, is a basic one. To this problem various solutions have been suggested, representing differing philosophies of education as well as differing views on the psychology of learning.

The old *alphabet* method, by which the child was taught "to learn his letters" and use them in spelling out words, was replaced as long as forty-five years ago by various *phonetic* methods, systematically developed and yielding good results as far as independence in attacking new words was concerned. Children were carefully drilled in the proper

sounding of vowels and consonants through a variety of games, and were then taught to combine the sounds to form familiar words. Words which did not lend themselves to phonic analysis were taught by a sight-recognition method. Many children gained great assurance in reading in a comparatively short time, and these methods became extremely popular. The success which attended the phonetic method led certain school systems and many individual teachers to become so enthusiastic that they carried the teaching of phonics to rather extreme lengths, so that phonics as a bit of gymnastic drill became in certain cases an end in itself rather than a means for the teaching of reading. Where such teaching was overemphasized, subsequent study of the results showed that phonic analysis when over-accentuated may well lead to slow and labored reading, and that it can exaggerate a natural tendency to move the lips while reading silently. For these reasons, and also because of the steadily increasing interest in the project method and progressive-school organization, the popularity of the phonetic method showed a marked decline in many places from about 1920 onward. Getting the children down to definite drill in phonics did not fit in with the programs of the laboratory and progressive schools. It was difficult to see how such drill could really be related to the child's spontaneous activities. Accordingly, the so-called *whole-story* method was for a short time much in vogue among the more progressive schools. This method stressed the enjoyment of reading and emphasized the need for interesting, continuous content.

The essentials of this method (it had many variations) were the accurate memorization of a whole story or poem and its subsequent "reading" from an illustrated chart. Like the phonetic method, it gave the child a sense of mastery, for he found himself almost immediately able to "read" a whole story. Unfortunately the child's mastery, although less laboriously achieved, was far less real than that which he acquired through phonetic training. The procedure really did

encourage rapid reading, it emphasized the joy of reading, and it minimized the habit of word calling, which is disastrous to the acquisition of efficiency in reading. The gifted child, provided he were attentive and self-critical, learned rapidly; but the less gifted, the careless, and the inattentive developed some very shiftless habits.

The *whole-story* method naturally did not stop short at whole stories. As common sense would demand, the child was drilled in the recognition of individual sentences, phrases, and finally of words. A duplicate chart was made and cut into pieces for purposes of drill, and flash-card exercises were a part of the regular procedure. But rapid progress to a second and a third story, repeating certain of the phrases of the first, was usual where the whole-story method was in vogue, and many children were able to memorize the stories so thoroughly that they could effectively simulate reading when, in fact, they were only repeating parrot-fashion material which they had learned by rote. The advocates of the whole-story method, because of their interest in developing speed and the rapid reading of enjoyable material, encouraged silent reading, sometimes almost to the exclusion of oral reading. It seemed to many that the old-fashioned methods of oral reading — one child reading aloud, thirty-nine others presumably following—were deadening to interest, and that oral reading should be restricted to audience situations, when the reader himself had some reason for reading aloud and the group for listening. Where silent reading was overstressed, naturally enough all sorts of habits of mispronunciation developed. Most serious of all was the case of the bright but careless individual who deluded himself into thinking he could read — had, in fact, read a primer and a first reader — when he had simply memorized all the stories and could read just as well with the book turned upside down. His awakening was very painful, and the process of his reeducation was laborious and difficult. It is as a result of misuses and mistakes in connection with the whole-

story method that many progressive teachers have turned to phonics with renewed interest during the last few years.

The *opportunistic* method should not, in one sense, be discussed as though it were a coordinate of other definite methods of teaching reading. This method is rather an expression of the philosophy of certain progressive schools and teachers. These progressives felt — perhaps one should say feel — that reading should be taught only when the incentive to learn comes from the child's own interests. On the whole they regard the teaching of reading as an incidental matter, rather than a main purpose, with children six and seven years old. Accordingly, the teacher in schools where the opportunistic method is in vogue merely plans a classroom environment supposedly rich in possibilities for interesting children in reading, and virtually leaves the decision as to when formal teaching shall begin to the children themselves. In such situations reading practice is given only when the child himself feels the need for it and comes to it of his own wish. Years of experience in the use of this method have convinced many thoughtful teachers that it does not provide enough drill in reading for the average child. Inasmuch as he does not get enough practice, the pupil does not get the success and satisfaction which he needs as encouragement to go on. He becomes disheartened, and easily gets a set against reading which develops into a real reading problem. As time goes on and the child reaches the age when his playmates who do not attend progressive schools are quite advanced in their ability to read, he develops a sense of inferiority. Furthermore, if he does not really get down to reading until he is seven or eight years old, the very easy material of a primer is most uninteresting to him. Some exceedingly superior children who failed to learn to read in the first grade or two of a progressive school, simply because they like the school's other activities better, are still seriously handicapped in speed and accuracy in the fifth and sixth grades. The one unquestioned advantage of

the opportunistic method appears in the case of the superior child whose extraordinary intellectual aptitude enables him to read with very little drill, and whose literary interest is keen. Such a child is inclined to read too avidly, neglecting other valuable activities. A classroom which tempts him to neglect reading a bit and attend to other things is perhaps better for such a child. However, one can scarcely believe that a thoroughgoing opportunistic method will be necessary for these rare children when teachers become more skillful in providing varied classroom activities and are less tempted to exploit the very able pupil.

The *intrinsic* method developed by Gates and others was designed to give children careful and thorough training in reading, and at the same time to avoid the dangers of slowing up speed by too much emphasis on phonic analysis, by relating reading closely to the child's natural interests. In Gates' words:

The implication of this theory is that children are no longer to be required to study phonics, or study words, or study reading in the older sense of the term "study." They are, on the contrary, to be introduced to a related series of projects in which their inclination to engage in varied linguistic, dramatic, artistic, constructive, and exploratory activities are given play. In these natural and satisfying activities should be encountered situations so arranged that (quoting Dewey) "pupils will make the responses which cannot help having learning as their consequence." The development of all reading abilities, in other words, should be the "natural and necessary result" of doing the things which the series of situations calls for, instead of the outcome of forced and effortful teaching and study.¹⁷

The essential points of the *intrinsic* method may be summed up as follows: (1) The method is based upon a thorough and extensive study of the interests of lower elementary school children. (2) Reading material provided in

¹⁷ Arthur I. Gates, *Interest and Ability in Reading*, copyright 1931, by Arthur I. Gates. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

primers and readers is selected in terms of these interests. (3) Practice material too is selected and arranged with a view to interest and is closely related to actual reading material. Drill material is planned to give direct practice in thought getting, and in actually reading from the printed page rather than from charts and flash cards. (4) Well-standardized tests are available for use in connection with the intrinsic method and are so planned as to be diagnostic of the individual child's strengths and weaknesses in reading. The tests show how the ability of a certain child to recognize words compares with that of other children of his age and grade, and give separate evidence as to how well he is progressing in the recognition of phrases and the mastery of content.

The value of teaching phonics as an aid to reading is not questioned. Quoting Gates once more,¹⁸ "We need a method that will develop phonetic skills so that they work when and where needed, namely, in the actual process of reading for thought. . . . In a sound system, the 'mechanical' and 'thought-getting' training will not be separated, but combined."

In the latest edition of his book, *The Improvement of Reading*, Gates says concerning phonetic analysis, "There can be little doubt of the value of this type of skill, when it is adequately and economically acquired."¹⁹ However, he also says, "The modern policy is to help the pupils learn to utilize *all* types of word characteristics from the beginning."²⁰

Among these word characteristics he mentions (1) dependence upon striking characters — for example, the dot over the *i*. Pupils are disposed to use this cue in the early stages of learning words. (2) Dependence upon the general configuration of the word, which as Gates explained is ex-

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

¹⁹ Gates, *The Improvement of Reading*, p. 195. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 203. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

cellent in itself, but hardly sufficient, since configurations such as *then* and *than*, *lead* and *head*, for example, are very much alike. (3) Spelling out the word, by the alphabet method. This is very slow, although often successful. (4) Syllabication — breaking up the word into familiar parts or syllables. (5) Recognizing little words in bigger words, for example *eat* in *eating*. (6) Visual analysis, that is, seeing the word in part and putting these parts together without thinking of their sounds. (7) Phonetic analysis.²¹

Gates believes that the teacher's guidance of reading may influence the techniques of word recognition greatly; he also says, "Despite the fact that there is, in the typical case, development in skill in word recognition for many years, children often learn to employ practically all the devices in some degree *in the first few weeks of beginning reading*." ²²

Gates ²³ puts the period during which the child will read fluently and with full understanding material largely composed of familiar words only, "at about three months in duration." Gray²⁴ allows twelve to twenty weeks for the reading of books of primer difficulty.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDEPENDENCE IN READING

Gates ²⁵ distinguishes an "initial independent reading period" and places it around the end of the first term in grade one for the average pupil. At this stage the "reasonable mastery of the process of reading simple, connected material with appropriate eye movements and full understanding" is being achieved, and the child is also beginning to develop techniques of working out the pronunciation and meaning of

²¹ *Ibid.* Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 202. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

²³ N.S.S.E., "The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report," *Thirty-sixth Yearbook*, Part I, p. 95.

²⁴ W. S. Gray, another of the foremost authorities in the field.

²⁵ Gates, *The Improvement of Reading*, pp. 30f. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

unfamiliar words. The ability to recognize familiar words at a mere glance is also developing, resulting in greater speed and occasionally in greater inaccuracy. Supervision and careful teaching are all-important; Gates says that "effective instruction in word analysis pays rich dividends," and it is also most important to check inaccuracy even while encouraging speedy recognition. By the end of five or six months of reading instruction — that is, when the second semester of the first grade is well underway — a degree of development which Gates calls the "advanced primary reading period" will have been attained by the typical pupil. He is now sufficiently confident, and has a large enough sight vocabulary, a sufficiently developed ability to attack new words by using context clues, and visual and phonetic elements, to warrant giving him supplementary reading material, provided the teacher is aware of the number and frequency of unfamiliar words in the material, and provided it is very easy. "This is the time," Gates says, "to get into full swing the steady, rhythmic, progressions along the line and the habit of grasping the context accurately and fully,"²⁶ and to achieve these ends easy material is needed with the minimum of words which are new and therefore slow up rhythmic progression. Of this advanced primary reader Gates however indicates, "He is still a word-by-word reader. He is likely still to make a given number of errors in word recognition and frequently to fail to get the thought fully or accurately."²⁷

LATER STAGES OF INDEPENDENT READING

Typical pupils, if they have been given adequate pre-reading experiences and have been well taught during the early stages of learning to read, would have achieved a degree of independence in reading in advance of what Gates calls "the primary stage" by the middle of their first term in

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 32. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

²⁷ *Ibid.* Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

second grade. The task of the second-grade teacher, so far as such pupils are concerned, is to keep up the good work by highly motivated practice and continually vigilant supervision to assure the maintenance of good reading techniques already acquired. Meanwhile she encourages the use of more and more mature methods of attacking new words, the development of speed without sacrifice of accuracy, and the increasing use of reading for pleasure and information.

But all pupils are not typical pupils, and even if apparently typical pupils are isolated for observation they may prove to be atypical in their reading ability for any number of what we may call personal reasons. So the second-grade teacher must expect variations in reading ability, necessitating divisions in the class. For this reason the Cincinnati *Manual* suggests three divisions, the number in each being limited to twelve or fifteen, and the slowest division being kept as small as possible. Each group should have forty minutes or so of systematic reading instruction daily, divided into two periods. The reading activities should be related to centers of interest — in science, social studies, the arts, or whatever the particular interest may be — so far as possible. Such integration is naturally feasible in the case of the most competent groups, the members of which can use books effectively to get information. But intermediate and slower groups as well can be helped to contribute to the class interests, through reading, by carefully prepared oral reading or by very simple study assignments. The alert teacher will provide a wide variety of reading activities, including library periods, either in the classroom or at the public library; incidental reading (bulletins, directions, assignments, and charts); independent practice in silent reading; group work preparatory to reading or telling stories; reading parties; research reading to find answers to class problems.

The essential habits and skills to be developed during this period of reading include thoughtful silent reading, effective

oral reading, and skill in the use of the library. In connection with silent reading activities, pupils should be trained to read different types of content at different rates. They should learn to scan (that is, to read quickly), to locate certain facts, find main events, follow a sequence, or find out how a story ended. They should also practice the slower study variety of reading, in order to organize and reproduce details.

Evaluation of progress toward the end of this period of reading development is carried out through careful observation, informal testing, and finally through the use of standardized reading tests, such as the Gates Primary Reading Test. With more mature groups, methods may be worked out whereby the children themselves cooperate in evaluating their reading progress.

The ensuing level of reading development Gates calls "the transition period from primary to intermediate reading." The Cincinnati *Manual* places this at the end of the second grade, continuing through the third grade. Gates puts it a little earlier in the child's school career, stating that it begins "a few months after the child enters the second grade," and "continues until the middle of the second term in the third grade or a little longer, in the typical cases."²⁸ "During the transition period, the pupil will refine his perception of words so that an increasing number can be recognized instantly, on the basis of 'reduced cues.'"²⁹ He will further begin to recognize phrases or other word combinations at sight, perceive familiar thought units instantly, reduce the number of his eye stops in the course of reading a line. He will begin to acquire what is known as the "eye-voice span" or "eye recognition span," that is, get an impression of words which are coming ahead in the text he is reading. He will begin to skim fairly effectively. In the words of a pupil

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

quoted by Gates, ". . . He will be able to advance . . . from the stage of 'reading by talking' to the stage of 'reading by thinking.'" ³⁰

By the end of the third grade, the average child should reach what Gates calls "the intermediate reading stage." That is, he should be ready to use reading as a tool in accomplishing the work required of him in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades. At the third-grade level, the class may spend as much as two hours of the school day in activities closely related to reading, in addition to a daily period of systematic instruction. For pupils reading below grade expectancy, there should be two periods of such instruction.

Mature readers in the third grade may learn to make use of more advanced methods of word analysis in connection with their work in spelling. For example, such children may profitably learn syllabication and be given practice in recognizing prefixes and suffixes. The more spelling can be related to reading, the more certain the child's progress in both subjects.

ORAL READING

During the primary stages of reading, oral reading is motivated through the development of "audience situations" in which stories are read or interesting information is imparted. The average child is keenly interested in reading to his classmates. At the third-grade level, oral reading is still an important activity. It should be used as a socially valuable activity as well as a means of refining language skills. The teacher must remember, however, that her best readers can now recognize words more rapidly than they can say them, since the eye recognition span is now developing rapidly. Too much oral reading will tend to slow down the pupils' rate of silent reading, and discourage children who are able to read and comprehend rapidly and well. It goes without saying that real audience situations should be created, and

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

that the old custom of expecting thirty-nine pupils to follow silently the matter being read aloud by the fortieth pupil cannot be defended in the light of present theory.

REMEDIAL READING INSTRUCTION

The scientific study of educational problems during the last thirty-five years or so has gradually revealed not only the prevalence of reading difficulty among upper grade pupils but also the serious effects of this difficulty upon school progress and personality development. Accordingly, remedial reading programs have been developed in many schools and school systems. Such programs are usually planned and directed by specialists in the field, and carried through by teachers particularly skilled in the teaching of reading. The essential characteristics of remedial instruction are that it is individual in emphasis and that it is based upon careful study and diagnosis of individual difficulties. Dr. Gates has consistently explained that remedial instruction is therefore in no essential respect different from ordinary, competent teaching of reading. In a recent statement he says; "As a general theory of teaching . . . there is no distinction between regular developmental classroom teaching and remedial instruction. The difference in practice is one of degree."³¹

This is evidently in complete accord with the statement of the same author's viewpoint as to the causes of reading difficulty. He says,

The point of view represented in this volume [*The Improvement of Reading*] . . . concerning causes of difficulty in reading may now be briefly stated. Most difficulties, ranging from the least to the most serious, are believed by the writer to be due primarily to failures of the pupil to acquire techniques that might have been acquired had the right guidance and instruction been given at the right time.³²

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 121. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 14. Used by permission of The Macmillan Company.

**SUMMARY: THE READING PROGRAM IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

The discussion of reading in the lower school curriculum offered in this chapter will have served to introduce the student of early childhood education to the theories underlying modern reading instruction and to the more important and significant of contemporary practices. The material presented may be summarized as follows:

1. The reading program of today is based upon a very considerable scientific study of the complicated processes involved in this skill.

2. As a result of this study, it appears highly important to defer the beginning of formal reading instruction until the pupil shall have attained the requisite maturity — physical, intellectual, and emotional — to respond to such instruction with ease and efficiency.

3. An elaborate, carefully planned reading readiness program, which takes account of the child's preschool experiences and seeks to enlarge them, is the rule in progressive schools.

4. The child's interest in reading is understood to be an exceedingly important factor in his learning; therefore a high degree of motivation is essential in all reading readiness activities as well as in formal instruction.

5. At all points reading is carefully related to the child's other experiences, both in and out of school. In one sense, reading is incidental to other experiences, for from the first it is utilized in connection with interesting activities and serves to give both pleasure and information. But it is in no sense accidental. The modern reading program is carefully planned, systematic, and takes into account that learning to read, while highly enjoyable, is also hard work.

6. The new reading methods are varied in their approach; introductory techniques based wholly on sight recognition, once in vogue in progressive schools, have given place to careful, systematic vocabulary building.

7. In the recognition of new words, children are taught to use a number of useful ways of attack, rather than any one. Phonic analysis as a means of developing independent reading ability is encouraged among other methods, although it is not carried on as an end in itself.

8. Efficient remedial reading programs are provided when and where needed, but it is generally hoped that the need for such programs will decrease progressively as methods of ordinary reading instruction are further and further refined.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Review the meaning of the term "norm." Summarize what Gesell and Ilg have to say about the right use of norms.
2. How should norms affect the conduct of first-grade reading instruction?
3. Dr. Gates holds that remedial reading instruction is not essentially different from efficient reading instruction without remedial emphasis. Explain his reasons for this conclusion.
4. Where does Gates place the responsibility for the continuance of large numbers of poor readers? How do administrative problems enter into this question?
5. Some educators have recommended the "incidental" teaching of reading in early childhood. What is meant by such teaching? Do you think it would be effective with most pupils? How would Dr. Gates regard such instruction?
6. How do interesting experiences promote reading readiness?
7. List some indications that a pupil is ready to read, basing the list on your own knowledge of children and on what you have learned through study.
8. Did you enjoy oral reading periods when you were a child? Whether your answer is affirmative or negative, Why?

9. Suggest some genuine audience situations which may be used in second or third grade to motivate oral reading.
10. For what purposes should a child have been taught to read by the time he leaves the third grade?

CHAPTER X

The Language Arts and Literature

... the heart of language is not the "expression" of something antecedent, much less expression of antecedent thought. It is communication; the establishment of co-operation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership.

JOHN DEWEY¹

Elementary schools the world over devote a large proportion of their time to the language arts, oral and written expression, and the technique of reading. Not only are these activities of immediate significance to the pupil in and of themselves, but the command of language is also fundamental to the progress of his general education. In fact it is no exaggeration to say that language is the one subject taught continuously throughout the school day, in the course of every other activity. To quote a leading authority,

Language is so frequently involved in thought and especially in making fine abstractions and fine distinctions and shades of meaning, as well as in communicating to others the results of

¹ John Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 179.

one's thought processes, that a certain basic level of attainment in linguistic skills is practically an essential prerequisite to a child's formal education.²

Theories as to the nature and function of language itself have been the subject of learned discussions in more than one field in recent years. The socio-behavioral view of language as an essential activity of human life, implied by Dewey's statement that "*it is communication*," is the one currently accepted in the field of education. Language is therefore a broader term than speech; in fact, broader than "the language arts" as this term is used in our courses of study. Language as synonymous with communication includes the language of the arts, of signs, of gesture, quite as well as speech and the printed word. The main subject for discussion in the present chapter is the language arts as understood in the school curriculum, the guidance of the child in his development of conventional forms of speech and written communication. But linguistic expression *as an art* will be considered the final goal of conventional language teaching, a goal to be completely realized only by a gifted few, yet to be achieved at least in part and occasionally by all.

THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

There is evidence to show that the mechanism for the production of vocal sounds is ready to function considerably before birth, but language in the sense of communication is dependent upon auditory and social stimulation. The vocalizations of the healthy baby, his experiments with the complicated vocal apparatus are the raw material, so to speak, of language. Some of his sounds, ma-ma-ma, da-da-da, get results. They are practiced, combined, and recombined; they constitute what one psychologist calls his "active lan-

² Dorothea McCarthy. "Language Development in Children," *Manual of Child Psychology*, Leonard Carmichael, ed., p. 477.

guage.”³ Gradually he learns the meaning of words which others use; these sound combinations constitute his “passive” language, practiced through imitation. He also echoes back, for the pleasure of the sound, words he hears but the meaning of which he does not know. The first words he uses meaningfully are functionally complete sentences.⁴ He soon learns to use tone and gesture to clarify his meaning. Many months before that delight of the primary school teacher, the complete sentence, puts in an appearance, he is a communicative person whenever he wants to be, and frequently something of a poet. He loves the sound of certain words and, left to himself as his linguistic skill develops to the point of combining words, he combines them rhythmically. For this reason poetry is his natural language. As late as the junior nursery school age, however, the desire to communicate is by no means the only motive, nor perhaps the most urgent one, for his vocalization. Studies of the young child’s language show it to be in large part egocentric,⁵ little thought being taken as to whether the listener understands what he says, or, for that matter, whether there is always a listener. Even the language of kindergarten children⁶ is largely self-assertive, even though by this level it is very social.

Appreciation of the poetic quality of the young child’s speech, its quaintness and its charm, must not be allowed to obscure the importance of communication for his social development. Communication in our society is hedged about by complicated conventions, the understanding and use of which are vital to satisfactory social adjustment.

The child, as well as the adult, must learn to listen and converse, to read and report, to make requests and express thanks;

³ Gardiner Murphy, *General Psychology*, pp. 295f.

⁴ Dorothea McCarthy, *The Language Development of the Preschool Child*.

⁵ Jean Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child*.

⁶ Harold Rugg, L. F. Krueger, and A. Sondergaard. “A Study of the Language of Kindergarten Children.” *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Vol. 20, pp. 1-18.

he must learn to write letters and thank-you notes, to make simple reports and records, as well as to compose original stories and poems. Communication through language calls for a number of skills.⁷

The social courtesies of language are also important. "The child must not only know how to speak but when to do so; not only how to choose a topic but how to consider his listener or reader in its presentation."⁸ These learnings should be accomplished ideally without discouraging spontaneous, free expression, without slowing up the flow of ideas while the child is trying to learn to share these ideas, correctly and acceptably, with others. As a pedagogical problem, this is one of the most difficult. The choice often appears to be between spontaneous, charming expression and stilted *correct* expression. A perfect balance can be achieved only through the most artistic sort of teaching.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE HOME

The role of the family in the development of language patterns is crucial, as both intelligent general observation and controlled studies show. The passive language of imitation should be based on excellent models; the encouragement of the active language patterns selected from babbling sounds should be intelligent and discriminating. "Baby talk" may be delightful to the parental ears, but it is a handicap to the child himself if encouraged and persisted in. At a later age, incessant interrupting and lack of consideration for the interests of others are a hindrance in conversational activity. Unfortunately, this too passes as "cute" in many home environments.

LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL

The nursery school teacher plans the environment and the activities of the group with language development as one

⁷ Catholic University of America *Course of Study*, Vol. I, p. 124.

⁸ *Ibid.*

of her objectives. With the youngest children, she encourages listening, and is appreciative of play with sound and rhythm. Unless she differs radically from the theory advanced by Harriet Johnson and other authorities, she does little to stimulate conversation in the two-and-a-half-year-old group; she merely helps the children to explain their needs in intelligible fashion. She uses simple and correct language in her own dealings with the children, not encouraging baby talk, while at the same time accepting for the time being each child's baby expressions in connection with his bathroom needs and other basically important matters. With three- and four-year-olds, she tactfully but definitely discourages baby talk, often in the face of secret opposition at home.

The nursery school worker enjoys cuteness, too, but she knows it is not her business to enjoy it at the child's expense. Babyish speech is undesirable in the first place simply because it is an infantile way of behaving, and should be discarded along with other baby ways as the child grows older. Moreover, persistent baby talk may take on the proportions of a speech defect. At best it is a source of embarrassment to the child himself when he reaches the mature age of five or six. Without being pedantic, the trained adults in a nursery school try to teach correct enunciation and pronunciation from the very start, using simple and correct language when conversing with the children, and helping individuals gradually to increase their vocabularies by the addition of useful words. The competent nursery school teacher also restrains herself from talking too much. She does not shower the child with profuse words of praise, nor make an issue in many words of his mistakes and misdeeds, but tries to combine friendliness and warmth with clarity and brevity of speech, engaging the child in conversation only when he seeks to converse, and falling in with his conversation rather than intruding a theme of her own. Nancy is looking at the aquarium intently, watching the darting movement of the goldfish or the slow pace of the snail. She

then looks up at the teacher. "Goldfish?" inquires Nancy. "Yes, pretty goldfish. Swimming," or some other appreciative and friendly answer is in order for the teacher. But if Nancy doesn't even notice the adult's presence, it is a mistake to accost her and say, "See the pretty goldfish!" Nancy sees them, and shows no desire to talk about them. She is entitled to her private observation.

Among four-year-olds and fives there is plenty of spontaneous conversation, highly self-assertive to be sure, but social. Into this conversation the teacher often enters, with friendly comment or timely suggestion. Children who have stimulating home backgrounds, with lives interesting and vivid enough to provide them with content for expression, generally progress rapidly in their language activities. Little more need be done at school to stimulate them. But when children have meager home backgrounds, extra effort should be made to make the nursery school environment an interesting one, and to enrich the child's experience through stories, pictures, records, excursions, visiting pets, or other means which appear to be suitable in particular situations. The first essential for expression is something to express; no one, child or adult, whose surroundings are circumscribed can be an interesting conversationalist. It is one of the important aims of nursery education to supplement the home in this respect, thus helping to reduce the inequity of preschool experience which makes it difficult for many children to adjust to later school demands. In addition, both children and adults require an interested and sympathetic audience to do themselves justice. This, too, should be assured in the nursery school for all children, but especially for those whose families have little time or inclination to provide audiences at home.

LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE KINDERGARTEN

We read in the Cincinnati *Primary Manual*,⁹

The sequence in language development requires recognition of each child's present stage of development and consciousness

⁹ Cincinnati Public Schools, *Primary Manual*, p. 74.

of the goals to be attained in reaching the next level of development. Each child must proceed from his present stage to the next desirable stage, regardless of his grade placement, and regardless of any goals and standards traditionally attached to his grade or age.

That is to say, language development should be appraised in terms of individual standards. The kindergarten program affords ample opportunity for the development of individual abilities through both informal and guided conversations. The Literature Program, to be discussed later in this chapter, is an all-important aid to language development. Grade expectancies for the kindergarten child are summarized in the *Manual* as follows:

By the end of the year, the child
Has acquired an enlarged and more meaningful vocabulary
Has developed basic oral language habits
Presents ideas spontaneously and in turn to the group
Listens while others speak ¹⁰

Correction of speech defects should begin in the kindergarten, but it is most important that such correction be carried on with careful regard for the basic principles of mental hygiene. At no time should the child be made self-conscious because of his defect in articulation, voice, or rhythm. At all times his self-confidence should be built up and his speech motivated through real need for oral communication. The teacher is herself the model for the child to imitate; she must look to her own speech carefully and conscientiously. In all severe cases of speech disorder, she should arrange for expert advice.

The need for written language in the kindergarten is usually restricted to letters dictated by the class to the teacher — thank-you notes, invitations, a request to the principal for permission to go on an excursion, and an occasional dictated story. Children who are absent because of illness like to hear from the class. It is sometimes well for the kindergarten

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

teacher to take down a story, a poem, or a riddle, and read it to the class.

THE LANGUAGE ARTS: GRADES I TO III

Growth in the use of the language arts requires the progressive development of the abilities involved in (1) Listening; (2) Oral Expression; (3) Written Expression; (4) Reading.

Listening

Children who have had kindergarten experience should have developed some ability to listen, in the sense of being politely quiet when someone else is speaking. But there is more to listening than passive reception. Listening is above all a thinking process, and the child must learn to follow a sequence of thoughts, to listen for important points, and to evaluate what is said. In the first grade it is possible for the teacher to plan many opportunities for interested listening. Poetry, music, and literature all help the child to recognize and enjoy rhythm; in the case of poetry rhyming may also be noted. Favorite parts in story or poem, new and interesting words, may also be listened for and noted. Directions, clearly and simply given, provide another variety of listening opportunity.

Oral Expression

Gradually the primary school child learns to take an intelligent part in group discussions, to give clear explanations, to tell stories, to use such conversational courtesies as "May I?" "Please." "Thank you." "Excuse me." Gradually the child learns to tell jokes and riddles, to make rhymes and jingles. (In the interest of verse writing, rhyming should be used with discretion. "There was a cat. She sat on a mat," and such original inspirations have no poetic value. Rather do they hinder true rhythmic impulses.) A gradual increase in vocabulary and a growing sensitiveness to standards of

good speech should be the outcomes of these activities. If he has been skillfully guided and encouraged, the following expectancies are reasonable by the time the pupil leaves the third grade. He

is more discriminating in his choice of conversational topics than younger children;

is active and courteous in group discussion;

speaks with clarity and in a pleasing voice;

tells a story with ease, getting to the point and giving vivid descriptions;

enters into a group dramatization with competence and enjoyment;

is interested in enlarging his vocabulary;

knows something about planning good opening and closing sentences for stories and reports, and has some ability to organize thought before speaking;

can give a good, clear explanation of procedure under specific circumstances: such as a fire drill; can give directions for reaching a given place. He has begun to sense audience reaction, to know whether the group is interested, bored, or indifferent with regard to what he is saying.¹¹

These goals are achieved slowly and gradually; they represent remote objectives toward which even the kindergarten child should be beginning to move.

Written Expression

The Cincinnati *Manual* recognizes three stages in written language as the child progresses through the kindergarten and early grades, (1) Readiness for Written Expression; (2) Cooperative group composition; (3) Individual Composition.

Readiness for Writing. By "Readiness for Written Expression" the writers of the Cincinnati *Manual* mean the stage at which the child appreciates the use of writing. In this

¹¹ See *Ibid.*, pp. 85f.

sense readiness is present among many nursery school groups, where the children are accustomed to having their possessions and their drawings labeled, and where they are trying to put their own names on their work. "Readiness" in the sense of the sensori-motor development required to develop writing as a skill is another matter. Careful individual study is necessary to determine this sort of readiness, and even when the child gives evidence of being able to print letters he should never be encouraged or pushed when he gives the least evidence of fatigue. Such overstimulation violates the basic psychological principle that teaching should follow adequate maturation, and not seek to anticipate normal growth processes. Loss of interest, at least temporary if not prolonged, even a set against writing, are the natural consequences of such violation.

Cooperative Group Composition. This method of composition is occasionally used in the kindergarten, in the situations previously noted.¹² It is highly desirable in the first grade, and useful in any lower grade class when there is real need for the group to write a letter. An example of such a composition at the first-grade level is the following:

Grade 1A-1 had made a spring poster for the school bulletin board. The teacher of 1A-4 took her class to see the poster. On their return to their own room, the class, prompted by the teacher, decided to write a letter to 1A-1 to tell those children how much 1A-4 liked their poster. When the children were seated and ready, the teacher called for suggestions. According to their directions, she wrote the date and the salutation. She then asked what to tell 1A-1. Ideas came thick and fast. "We liked your picture." "You didn't let the paint run all over." "You kept the colors separate." "That was a good bike." "You drew the boy well." "The paint wasn't muddy." "You didn't leave any spots." Then the selection of ideas and their arrangement in sequence began. Agreement was reached on the question of

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

how to begin the body of the letter. Finally, after ten minutes of lively discussion, the following letter appeared on the blackboard in the teacher's careful printing:

April 15, 1947

Dear Class 1A-1,

We like your poster very much.

The drawing is good. The colors are bright and clear. We like the boy and the bicycle.

Your work is neat.

Your friends,

Class 1A-4

The class then wrote individual letters, copying from the board. Not every one was expected to finish, nor was every one required to copy all the sentences in exactly the same sequence. A committee was appointed to select the best letter to send to 1A-1.¹³

As the writers of the *Cincinnati Manual* indicate, all three stages of written composition may be observed in the average first grade, although the third stage, individual composition, is reached by only a small percentage of children. By the use of carefully prepared charts, lists, labels, and brief notices on the blackboard the alert lower grade teacher keeps the importance of written expression continually in the children's minds.

The third stage of written composition, the individual one, is the point at which the teacher needs to make the most discerning decisions as to how far form may be sacrificed to content, especially in the case of the gifted child. How much copying and recopying and correcting will this second or third grader take without becoming disgusted and ceasing to produce original material? If he is allowed to practice wrong spelling, faulty or absent punctuation, disregard of capitals and paragraphs, when will he acquire standards and

¹³ The preparation of this letter required a good deal of teacher guidance and suggestion. But the activity was well motivated, apparently enjoyed by the children, and the results were good in terms of curricular achievement.

skills in these directions? Desire to communicate to others his composition, whether prose or verse, is the one strong, reliable motive for improvement of form. Can he read aloud to others what he has written? Can others read what he has written? As Gertrude Hildreth has explained, the first step in learning to spell is the development of a "spelling conscience."

"The bright child may at first question why 'chans' is not as desirable from the teacher's point of view as 'chance.' 'That's the way it sounds.' The teacher may have to explain that people accustomed to reading rapidly correctly spelled material would be annoyed and delayed in attempting to make out the meaning when sentences contain incorrect spellings. After the child understands this point of view and assents to its reasonableness, he must be severely penalized for errors in words on which he has practiced that fall within his writing needs.

"This desirable spelling conscience develops gradually. It seldom appears in children fully grown. It is achieved by the child's natural maturation plus the teacher's praise of correct spelling and discouragement of incorrect results."¹⁴

The same considerations pertain to punctuation, capitalization, and the development of the paragraph. As the child needs to learn forms in order to express his thoughts, he should be given every incentive to do so. Strictly speaking, he should never be taught in advance of this need, and should be consistently encouraged through honest praise of the content of his compositions.

Spelling Expectancies in the Lower Grades. Spelling as a subject for study is now generally omitted from first-grade courses of study. A definite study of spelling in the second grade is a fairly general requirement. Teachers are advised to consult scientifically selected lists, and plan their work accordingly. When teachers prefer to teach the correct spelling of a word only when the word is immediately

¹⁴ Gertrude Hildreth, *Learning the Three R's*, pp. 212f.

needed, they are advised to check against one of these lists, to keep adequate track of individual and group progress. The following suggestions for the teaching of spelling are now widely accepted.

1. Teach first the meaning of the word. Check results by requiring that it be used in context.
2. Write the word clearly.
3. Pronounce the word; have the child pronounce it as he studies it.
4. Give the child ample time to study the word.
5. Erase. Let the child write the word from memory.
6. Check. Repeat.

Each child should be encouraged to keep his own individual word list; lists of words the class needs should be kept on the board or upon a prominent chart in the room.

By the third grade, children should have developed real independence in improving their spelling skill. The use of individual notebooks and picture dictionaries should be increasingly helpful.

Handwriting. For information on the teaching of handwriting the student is referred to the various good manuals obtainable. In general, manuscript writing, a natural step from printing, is the rule in first grades. A point is made of providing the child with good light, comfortable chairs and tables, large soft-leaded pencils or marking crayons, one-inch ruled paper, size 9 by 12 inches, and a good model. Writing periods should be very brief, and whatever is written should have meaning to the child.

There is general agreement that the manuscript form should be continued until the child is mature enough to learn cursive writing easily. There is no general agreement as to when, in his progress through the grades, the average child reaches this point — nor, for that matter, is there complete agreement as to whether it is not better to encourage the development of individual chirographic style directly from the manuscript form.

Literature for Young Children

The influence of literature upon character and personality in the early years of life has been appreciated from the beginning of conscious education. The stories and poems which the child learns to know and love in his nursery and early school days play the same part in his life that adult literature plays in the lives of men and women. Literature, for both child and adult, provides relaxation and aesthetic pleasure. A delightful tale takes us out of ourselves and gives re-creation in the fullest sense of the word. The sound of well-chosen words, the rhythm of prose and verse, the happy metaphor, give sheer pleasure. Through the vicarious experiences with which good reading provides us we enter into the lives of others, gaining some insight into the motives of great men, the springs of tragedy, the conflicting purposes which make for human weal and human woe. To the very young child his own self, his wants and purposes, are the only vivid realities. Gradually, as time goes on, the "not-self" takes more definite form, and he is able to feel some objective interest in the world of other people and of things. But almost until the close of the period which we are here discussing, the lower-school years, children live in a very narrow world. Their concepts of human nature and human life are constructed wholly from their experiences in their own immediate surroundings. Through stories and anecdotes of other people, other surroundings, other times, this childish horizon is gradually broadened and expanded.

The Nursery School. Stories for the very little child should deal almost entirely with the here and now. For the nursery baby, anecdotes about his own experiences are most suitable, and they are very much enjoyed. As he grows older, stories less intimately related to his own life and dealing more widely with the interesting elements in his environment are appreciated. Modern theory holds that both the content and the form of the story for the little child should be determined through a study of child life itself. Such study shows that

the vivid sensory and motor experiences of his everyday life are the high points in the child's appreciation. Anecdotes which relate and expand such experiences, which give the chance to re-enact their thrilling moments, are suitable in content. The form which such stories take in the best modern collections is the form the child himself gives them: a simple, clear-cut form of episodes loosely and naively connected and rhythmically told with plenty of repetition. Wealth of detail, expansion and elaboration, all the things which an adult mind yearns to do to a simple story, are beside the point and tend to spoil it for the child, who is easily confused by many words.

Enjoyment is the primary purpose of the literature program. But a further purpose, and an important one, is to help the child get clearer ideas about his environment, to help him interpret the actual world in which he lives. Therefore he should not be confused by fanciful tales, until through actual experiences and many "here and now" stories his feet are firmly upon the ground of actuality. This point of view represents a reaction against certain grievous mistakes which have heretofore been made in selecting stories for children. For instance, instead of studying the child in his own surroundings and taking from this the content of his literature, some writers and story-tellers have diluted great stories to what they considered a suitable consistency for the infant mind. When a prejudice against "negative stories" became general, good sturdy folk tales were mutilated by some juvenile authors to produce happy endings. The canons of simplicity and cheerfulness were responsible for much that was insipid, inartistic, and sentimental in the children's books of yesterday. At one stage in the history of children's literature, almost anything couched in short words that was simple, saccharine, and highly moral in tone was thought to be good literary material for the very young.

Today there is a wealth of new books for children. Our foremost juvenile writers and best juvenile illustrators have jointly produced a very wide selection of truly delightful

illustrated story books which are a joy to use with children. However, of late the output of children's books has been so prolific that it becomes necessary to develop standards in the light of which to judge the work of newer authors. Critics of wide experience warn that of the many published only a small percentage is of high quality and lasting merit. It is also necessary to select with care in terms of the background, age, and maturity of the group with whom a given book is to be used. Published lists of literature for children vary widely in their grade placement of materials.

For the very young child animal characters have a great appeal now as always. The small child recognizes himself and his doings in many of the good imaginative tales about animals — for instance, the adventures of Ping, or what Angus went through in getting acquainted with the ducks. Even when a little boy is the actual hero of the tale — as, for instance, in "Ask Mr. Bear" — the inclusion of animal characters as a sort of chorus adds very much to the story's charm for a youthful audience. In connection with this popular animal motif, it is important although by no means easy to set up canons of taste. The following questions are offered by way of suggestion to help evaluation: is the story a true anecdote and an accurate description of the qualities and behavior of the animals it portrays? If not true in fact, is it true to the general qualities of kittens, brown bears, rabbits, Scotties, ducks, or elephants as we know them? Are the illustrations artistic, realistic, humorous, or simply silly? Are the animals dressed in conventional clothes? In general is the effect of the pictures that of sympathetic interpretation, wholesome fun, accuracy, or burlesque? When stories about animals verge on the funny-paper type of buffoonery, when they are misleading and attribute to their four-footed characters traits which are wholly *out* of character, they are inartistic and trashy; when they are true to nature, imaginatively sympathetic, or subtly humorous they are an invaluable addition to children's libraries.

For the nursery child the pictures are the story, and the

successful storyteller knows how to show pictures so that all may see them who wish. It is an absolute rule to see that all promises about letting everybody see every picture be kept; it is almost as absolute a rule to know the story well in advance of telling it, so that the showing of the pictures becomes the greater part of the technique. A general rule about the picture books selected is that all illustrations, regardless of their subject, should be clear, straightforward, and colorful in their presentation.

A few short stories may be told in the junior nursery school without the accompaniment of pictures. Telling a story makes it possible to establish a close rapport with a small group of young children; the adult can watch the faces of her audience and gauge their responses from their expressions and the children enjoy watching the facial expressions and gestures of the storyteller. Good selections for telling in the nursery school are short everyday tales like those in *The Here and Now Story Book* or actual short anecdotes. Spontaneous true accounts of the doings of the family cat or of the squirrels in the tree outside one's window are usually favorites. The storyteller to both this and older age levels should be unaffected and not overdramatic in her manner, fulfilling the role of the simple raconteur rather than the professional entertainer. A story must be thoroughly mastered before it can be told effectively. For the youngest children the tales of Mother Goose, well selected, are good sources of literary entertainment, although some authorities disapprove even this traditional material. Visual aids other than book illustrations are enjoyed occasionally. One such is the flannel-graph,¹⁵ another the freehand drawings of the storyteller.

The Kindergarten and First Grade. Five- and six-year-olds love stories as much as or more than younger children do.

¹⁵ A flannel backdrop, with a suitable background picture made with wax crayon and pressed with a warm iron. Pictures are cut from inexpensive books and mounted upon flannel. As a story is told, the characters are placed upon the backdrop and adhere until removed.

Picture books are still greatly enjoyed, and the ability to listen in a larger and less intimate group than a nursery gathering is fairly well developed. But when the group exceeds twenty the storyteller has a real problem, particularly in connection with illustrated stories. Even if she knows the story by heart and need not look at the text herself, it is difficult to be sure every child sees each picture, and very disheartening to the child who cannot see. Therefore it is well to establish a policy before beginning the story: either that pictures will be shown after each part of the story, or at the end of the story, or those who did not see all the pictures will be given a chance to look at the book later. Of course these policies are substitutes at best for a good story situation in which everyone *can* see the illustrations. Especially in the lower primary grades a good storyteller can sometimes develop her program in literature best by telling her stories always without visual aid, relying on free play periods for the examination of story books. For this she must really be a good storyteller. A long story need not be memorized completely, but a good opening, an effective close, and a few guiding sentences throughout should be learned by rote. In using a story the charm of which lies in its language, the whole tale should be committed to memory, or the use of it should be deferred until the maturity of the children permits reading to them from a book. Some first grades have developed enough appreciation both of literature and of the books in which it is contained to enjoy being read to without looking at pictures.

The Second and Third Grades. Second- and third-grade children are constantly growing in their own reading proficiency, and more and more enjoy reading to themselves. They also are able to read to each other, and profit from experiencing an audience situation. At the same time expert reading aloud by the teacher remains an excellent teaching method, and should be used in the spirit of a leisure-time experience.

Children of this age level begin to enjoy tales of faraway places, and are also considered ready for well-selected folk and fairy tales. Such stories, we are reminded, are the creation of the primitive mind, and should therefore be scrutinized from the standpoint of mental hygiene. Some of them are evidently unsuitable, some less enjoyable to our modern children than others. Teachers are advised to choose from good collections, in terms of the particular interests of individual classes. The adult, too, should consider her own preferences; only stories really liked and appreciated by the storyteller herself should be used.

In summary, it may be said that the best modern opinion holds the "here and now" story grounded in the world of reality to be the most suitable for the young child. The content for this story is found in the child's own vivid experiences; the form follows the pattern in which these experiences occur. Of traditional children's literature, Mother Goose has value for its masterly form, if not always for its content for the younger children. Fairy tales belong to the older child whose hold on the world of actual things is already firmly established, rather than to his younger brother and sister, to whom the world of fancy is more vivid than the world of fact. Myths and legends, expressing as they do the innermost dreams and profoundest struggles of the human mind, are on the whole unsuitable for children and, with perhaps one or two exceptions, all out of place in the early school years.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION THROUGH LANGUAGE

Dramatics

Dramatics in the lower school should grow out of the simple dramatic games of the children, such as playing house, playing school, playing train. Encouraged by progressive teaching in music and rhythm and art, growing by degrees more complex and varied as the children's possession

of ideas increases, these games are the natural beginnings of drama. Stories and poems provide new imaginative themes, and the social studies gradually acquaint the young dramatists with more of life's activities, giving them the impetus to portray a wider range of experiences.

The direction of dramatic work should be carried out with the least possible adult interference. Every effort should be made to keep the spontaneity and lack of self-consciousness which are at once the essence and the charm of children's play. With gifted groups the teacher need do little beyond recognizing the interest of some dramatic game and taking the part of a sympathetic audience. The suggestion that someone else be invited to see the play often comes from the children themselves; if it does not, the teacher may suggest that another group — the kindergarten, if the play arises in the first grade — might like to see it too. Where people who really understand children are in charge of a school's policy, little children are never invited or encouraged to put on a show. They are simply given plenty of opportunity for dramatization which is interesting to themselves. When at the age of five or six they begin to feel themselves part of a school and want to do something for the rest of the school, small and sympathetic audiences may be invited. These should come not to see a performance, but to find out what the five-year-olds or six-year-olds are doing in their grade.

In less gifted groups where intelligence and spontaneity are lacking or when language difficulties cause constraint, the adult may be permitted to encourage dramatization by suggesting that the children dramatize a poem or a simple story. The steps in this dramatization include first, telling the story, then helping the children to memorize the important points; then letting them tell the story, and finally, telling the story in action. There is some difference of opinion as to how far such teaching should be encouraged;

many who have worked in progressive schools would wish to exclude, at least for the five-year-olds, any teacher-motivated dramatizations, except perhaps Mother Goose rhymes.

Shy and constrained children may sometimes be encouraged by acting in pantomime rather than in dramatization with a verbal accompaniment. Shadow pictures, produced by pantomime behind a sheet, with the light from the window behind the actors, are effective and serve a useful purpose in freeing the timid from self-consciousness. Actually, dramatics should be regarded as a division of the fine arts; they should be associated with music and dancing — not, as is so often the case, with lifeless teaching of oral English. Dramatics should call forth the child's creative ability, his power to express his feeling. They should not be debased to a method of memorizing commonplace stories.

Little children are content with very few properties; their active, untrammelled imaginations easily see the teacher's desk as a cave or a house, and a chair as a galloping steed. Children six and seven years old often respond well to a property box containing pieces of fabric, perhaps a gilt-paper crown, a wreath, and some other baubles. These fascinating accessories stimulate their imaginations and lead to more varied and elaborate dramatization. At all times care should be taken not to overstimulate, and at no time should an adult audience be invited to come and applaud. When parents and other adults visit well-managed schools for young children, they are warned beforehand to treat the children and their work with respect, never thoughtlessly applauding or laughing or remarking about "cuteness." In even the simplest dramatics adults must be on guard against exploiting children whose appearance or histrionic ability tends to push them into the limelight. All the children, not just the cute ones, must have the opportunity to express what is within them through the medium of gesture and language; so far as it can possibly be avoided, no one child should be permitted to show off.

Verse Writing

The natural rhythm of children's speech readily develops into actual verse writing with recognized poetic quality, provided intelligent and sensitive guidance is given. Records of progressive schools include a generous measure of excellent verse, much of it the work of talented children, it is true, but some of it representing the occasional flashes of insight which come to all normal boys and girls, sharpened into poetic form at the moment of inspiration through the encouragement of creative teachers. To both the gifted and the less literary-minded, the reading of poetry is one of the greatest incentives to write poetry. A teacher of young children must herself love poetry, and must have developed the ability to read poetry beautifully, if she hopes to stimulate the writing of verse. Poems with a singing quality are the best liked by little children. Many such poems should be read to them, with care lest the singing quality degenerate into a singsong drone. When six-year-olds (and more especially sevens and eights) are themselves able to read poems they should be asked to read them aloud, both individually and in choral speaking groups. Voice quality should gradually be brought under conscious control with practice, and if this is successfully accomplished choral speaking becomes a very worthwhile experience in literary appreciation. But far more delightful in its quality than the quaintest of rhymes is the poetry without rhyme which grows out of the child's natural, rhythmic speech, expressing his spontaneous fancy, frequently at moments when he is concerned with philosophy or religion:

A Small Child to His Mother at Bedtime

Do you know what the stars are, Mother?
They're the lights God puts out
So I won't be afraid
Of the dark.

Hughes Mearns ¹⁶

¹⁶ Hughes Mearns, *Creative Youth*.

" . . . then after the daddies and the mothers have children and grandchildren, the daddies and the mothers die, and then the children grow up, and so on, and on, and on. Does it go on forever, mother? Doesn't the world ever die?"

It is indeed a delicate teaching technique that is required to meet a five-year-old at this literary level, teaching him the forms of speech and of writing which he will need to go on with his creative work.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Study Hilda Conkling's *Poems by a Little Girl*, or some other collection of children's poems which you may prefer. Wherein does the charm of these verses lie? In your own contacts with children, do you recall any similar forms of expression?
2. List as many interesting sounds and rhythms as you can recall which are present in the daily environment of city children. Make another list descriptive of country sounds and rhythms.
3. Distinguish between children's "active" and "passive" language. At what age does a child cease to acquire passive language? What implications do you see for the teacher of little children as you consider how language is learned in early childhood?
4. What are some of the most serious consequences which may follow the prolonging of "baby-talk"? How should a teacher proceed to help a child outgrow this way of speaking, if the parents persist in thinking it is "cute"?
5. Creative expression in language, both spoken and written, may be hampered by too much insistence on correct form. Bearing this in mind, what suggestions can you offer for the guidance of a gifted third-grade pupil whose literary interest far outruns his ability to spell? What should be the policy of the teacher of young children when conducting "oral English" periods?

6. How may the practice of correct forms of expression be motivated in the second and third grade?
7. Summarize your own ideas as to the relative importance of form and content in the oral and written expression of children at the end of the third grade.
8. What are the most important means of developing the social usages of language in the primary grades?
9. Select for evaluation and discussion a story or a poem to be used at each educational level from the junior nursery school to the third grade.
10. Explain the reason why many authorities advise against using folk tales and fairy tales with preschool children.

CHAPTER XI

The Arts in Early Childhood Education

If we stop to ponder the matter, we realize that creative quality springs from some universal human disposition that is distilled differently by every individual. This creative quality derives in large part from the inner drives and feelings which underlie and are the dynamics of human behavior.

ROSE H. ALSCHULER and LA BERTA HATTWICK ¹

Expression in art entails the same acuteness of perception and employment of relevant meanings as every other intelligent execution of purpose in the practical affairs of life.

JOHN DEWEY *et al.*²

THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXPRESSION THROUGH THE ARTS

Creative ability as it is understood today is not the endowment of a selected few, but present to some degree in each normal individual. One does not need to be a great artist

¹ Rose H. Alschuler and La Berta Hattwick, *Painting and Personality*, p. 8.

² John Dewey *et al.*, *Art and Education*, p. 166.

to enjoy painting pictures, or a finished musician in order to sing and play with pleasure to oneself and no real violence to the sensitivities of others. Homes and schools of yesterday frequently discouraged artistic expression by the child of average ability through trying to teach him techniques too difficult for him or by ignoring or ridiculing his efforts. Today the aim of art education is to give every child the joy of creative expression, and to assure for him the enrichment of life which comes through increased appreciation of the beauty in everyday surroundings.

Many years ago Harold Rugg remarked that one of the great weaknesses of the "progressive" school was great emphasis upon "creative activity," so-called, and little understanding of the nature of the creative act itself. In the intervening years careful study of children at work and at play has contributed substantially to such understanding.

Like the spoken and the written word, the arts are to the child a means of communication, and just as the language of words is derived from the infant's spontaneous play with the vocal apparatus, so the "language" of the arts comes under his command, as he practices his motor and sensory abilities in the course of investigating his environment, as his movements grow less spasmodic, better coordinated, and hence more rhythmic and controlled. The delighted parent selects from the baby's prattle the syllables which are to be the basis of spoken languages; parental response soon gives these syllables meaning, so they are presently practiced to communicate the child's wants and feelings as well as for the sheer pleasure he derives from their sound. The same parent supplies the baby with toys to manipulate, thus assisting him to practice and develop his motor coordination. As he progresses from infancy to early childhood, among his playthings are or should be included blocks and balls, sand and clay and finger paints, paper and cardboard for construction, yarns for weaving and sewing, musical instruments to play upon, and a variety of equipment for climbing and

hanging and swinging. In the course of manipulating these materials the child begins to use them expressively, to reveal his constantly increasing store of meanings as well as to express his feelings. Regardless of the medium being employed, the order of development is roughly the same in the use of each. First the use of tool or material is aimless, representing only innate rhythms and impulses, like the experiments of the baby with his vocal apparatus. Using crayon drawing as an illustration, the response of the two-year-old when given crayon and paper, is a scribble. The motor activity is pleasurable to him; he practices, and as he does so the undifferentiated scribble becomes more controlled, the lines are firmer, there is a suggestion of vertical and circular form. Finally he names his scribble, giving his accidental product a meaning. He repeats his performance, and as he does so his mental and kinaesthetic responses become better coordinated. This stage of development is fairly comparable to the stage in language development of egocentric speech; he names his drawing for his own pleasure, its meaning is strictly private, he is concerned neither with realism nor with any onlooker. Two scribbles, identical to the adult beholder, may be given two quite different meanings. It is just at this point that adults frequently confuse him by asking him what he has drawn and telling him that what he has done does not express what he intends. "What is it?" "It doesn't look like a man. Where's his head?" "A cup should have a handle." These and like comments either discourage further activity entirely or effectively lessen the rapport — if any — heretofore existing between child and adult.

As time goes on, through many and various perceptual experiences, the child is steadily making acquaintance with things about him; he is adding to his store of meanings. As he forms clearer and clearer concepts, he draws, or paints, or models, or dramatizes, as the case may be, that which he *knows* rather than that which he *sees*. His concern for his public and what it may make of his communications is

slight, and develops very gradually unless it is artificially and quite mistakenly stimulated by adults. Quoting Lowenfeld, an authority in the field, the child expresses what he "actively knows" — that is, what has enlisted his attention. He exaggerates features which particularly interest him. For instance, he will when he discovers buttons, decorate a very small man with very large ones in his drawing or painting. As he is highly imaginative he will, when expressing "the thing as he sees it," produce highly colored versions of reality. Green hair is not incongruous in his fantasy, nor are pink horses nor orange grass.

Meanwhile, not only are the child's concepts growing in number and definiteness, but as he works to express them his motor coordinations are steadily developing. His movements are more rhythmic, he handles crayon or paint brush more steadily, as he works with clay he shows greater and greater deftness. He becomes interested in technique, and capable of learning it; normally he is also becoming highly socialized with the passing of his senior nursery school months. His public becomes more important to him; he will accept and profit by constructive criticism. Sensitive "teaching," unobtrusive but active, is in order.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN GUIDING EXPRESSION

The teacher's technique of guiding expressional activities is not essentially different from her technique in any other field, although there are as in all other areas of teaching important points of special emphasis which require consideration. As in all other teaching, so in the teaching of the arts the attitude of the teacher toward the child must be sympathetic, the motivation of activity good. Sequential arrangement, that is, planning activities so that what has been learned may be progressively developed through further employment in new situations, is in order provided it be very flexible. All guidance of learning situations should be based on sound knowledge of the laws of child develop-

ment; the art teacher needs especially to understand and appreciate the earliest stages of expression, for we are increasingly reminded that guidance during these stages is of importance not only for art education but also for the wholesome growth of the total personality. The teacher must be acute enough to realize and allow for the fact that the stages are not of the same duration in all children, that individuals do not live through a period of pounding clay or daubing with paint or scribbling and then pass quietly and permanently on to the next, but oscillate or even regress for long periods of time as a result of emotional episodes or other preoccupations. Such fluctuations must be accepted as a matter of course.

A background of education in the fine arts is assumed for all teachers, but in addition to taking courses on the adult level in both theory and technique, it is essential that the teacher of little children herself play with the materials they will use. She should manipulate these until she "gets the feel of them" and begins to understand both the pleasures and the difficulties which children derive from each. It is very necessary, too, to be resourceful in the care of materials and equipment, to plan how they shall be distributed and arranged so that the children have every reasonable freedom in the use of them without wasting supplies, abusing tools, or wrecking the appearance of the classroom. From the angle of safety as well as of economy and appearance it is important that children be taught to pick things up as they go along, and that the teacher herself make such incidental tidying up a part of her own duties. Good house-keeping is essential for fun, good training, safety, and peace with the custodial staff.

Finally, the teacher must know when and how to introduce specific techniques. She must not only be a passive student of children, but also an active guide, helping each child to grow in his appreciation and his uses of art media. Acuteness of perception depends not only upon inner growth

but also upon challenge to perceive accurately. The clarification of concepts and the development of thinking power can be aided through providing many and repeated meaningful experiences. Thinking, observing, selecting, and organizing — the essentials of effective expression — improve with intelligent practice like all other abilities. The crucial point in guiding little children is to refrain from intruding in their activities in advance of their actual need for teaching. In this field as in all others *maturation* should precede attempts at training, even though training at the right moment is both legitimate and helpful.

Madeleine Dixon, in *High, Wide, and Deep*, includes the following significant paragraph on helping children learn to paint:

As for pictures, you, as a teacher, must not be very demanding but must take most seriously their explanations — if explanations they (the fours) want to give, which isn't very usual, unless you ask for them. You will be able to suggest, for instance, when a fine "wild man" is painted at the bottom of the canvas, that it would be a good idea not to paint too near him; but you will have to bear it if he is entirely obliterated by the "grass." You can help here by bringing a slogan into some of the work: "Today one painting rule — where the brush has painted once, don't let it paint again." This is like a bayonet pushing everything ahead to one result, *clarity* — and they love it. However, *these are tools, not laws*, and if they (the children) don't have times of disregarding them, they may lose out on some exciting color discovery which might be there.³

A difficult teaching technique this, explaining good ways of doing things and never forcing them upon the pupil lest they "lose out on some exciting . . . discovery." But to suggest methods is the teacher's duty, because, as Dixon explains elsewhere, the use of them will keep certain children from "mechanical defeat in expressing some clear idea."

The varieties of media for expression which good schools

³ Madeleine Dixon, *High, Wide, and Deep*, p. 198.

of today provide for early childhood years are many; in this chapter it will be possible briefly to discuss only a few of those most generally employed. Because of this variety competent teachers have a wide latitude of choice as to which materials they introduce and when they introduce them. Choices should be based on both observation and understanding of the needs of any group of children and on knowledge of the particular possibilities and limitations of each type of material.

A knowledge of grade expectations is of course also required of the teacher; but such expectations will be found more and more flexible in modern courses of study, because of a growing understanding of the nature and complexity of the developmental processes, and because of a rapidly growing respect for the value of expressional activities in the child's resolution of his inner conflicts. The one basic expectation is that the child as an individual shall grow in perceptiveness, in motor coordination, in the sensing of relationships, in ability to organize, and in well-balanced personal-social adjustment.

EXPRESSIONAL MEDIA PROVIDED BY THE MODERN SCHOOL

Sand, Clay, and Finger Paints

The various graphic and plastic media provided by the school group themselves roughly according to the particular needs which they fill, the particular manner in which they serve the child at successive levels of his growth. Some are especially helpful because they encourage rhythmic movement in their manipulation, others because they make possible clarity of expression or permanence of result. Sand, clay, and finger paints may be endlessly manipulated, giving play to the larger muscles, encouraging rhythmic movement for the joy of the activity, with little or no concern for an end result. But accidental results naturally come about, giving increased pleasure, and the child grows through practice in his skillful use of the material, even while with these media

sheer play takes precedence over any intended result. Growth in conceptual power may be observed in the use of all, and conversely this manipulative play encourages conceptual activity as well as the relating of motor and kinaesthetic experience. Sand, after having been shoveled and sifted and poured and moved about, finally becomes tea, and is appropriately poured from teapot into cup. Or, if enough water is supplied, it becomes cookies or a birthday cake, or is used to make a tunnel. Clay after much beating and pounding and poking takes form as pancakes, rolls, oranges, and thence on to any number of objects. Finger paints presently show pleasing swirls and suggest various forms to the artist. Throughout the child's play with these media, his emotional satisfaction is apparent. No tools are actually required, although sand play doubles its interest when there are pails and shovels, containers to pour from, or cutters to cut with, and a spatula or other tool with which to whack and pound enhances the joys of clay. Finger paints, as their name implies, require no brush or other instrument; they are used with fingers, palms, elbows, sometimes even knees.

Sand play offers no permanence of result, and clay offers very little, at least for the preschool child. Later some of the best clay products may be fired, but those which withstand the process are few in number. There is little lament over this impermanence, unless the teacher mistakenly encourages too much effort in modeling objects without appropriate warning about breakage. Finger paintings are lasting products, admired by parents and classroom visitors. Their effectiveness makes them an excellent form of decoration for the nursery or kindergarten room, although at least in its early stages the effects of finger painting are mostly accidental. Lowenfeld,⁴ an authority in the field of art education, is opposed to their use in the early stages of "scribbling" or aimless response to motor impulses, on the ground

⁴ Viktor Lowenfeld, *Creative and Mental Growth*, p. 19.

that "Instead of progressing in control over their muscular activity, children become so involved in the enjoyment of the paste-like consistency that the activity for which finger painting was planned becomes subordinated."

The same writer also warns that finger paints may encourage reversion to an infantile interest in playing with all manner of dirt, even while he admits their value for maladjusted children. Alschuler and Hattwick⁵ comment upon the amount of supervision this medium requires. Even an enthusiast for finger painting must admit this is so. The materials are difficult to distribute in orderly fashion, at least at the nursery level which is the one to which Alschuler and Hattwick refer. The activity is highly stimulating and for this reason the classroom is noisy; teacher direction becomes difficult. Nevertheless, the sheer delight the children derive from this play, and their pleasing results, still make finger painting a favorite activity in the nursery school. Inhibited children, even though not actually inhibited to the point of being maladjusted, resist finger paints when first offered, and in many cases later appear to derive a great deal of release and enjoyment from the use of them.

Chalks, Easel Paints, and Crayons

Colored chalks may be mentioned as a medium similar to finger painting in that manipulation is highly pleasurable, interesting results are readily produced, and what the child doesn't like can be erased easily. They encourage rhythmic movements, and because of the softness of the outlines they easily yield effective results.

Easel paints and crayons lend themselves to definiteness of expression; with them the child may clearly say what he thinks and feels. According to Alschuler and Hattwick, easel painting seems to be the more adaptable medium of the two, and is preferred on the whole by children who appear to be working out their emotional problems through their expressive activities.

⁵ Rose H. Alschuler and La Berta Hattwick, *op. cit.*

The intent of the Alschuler and Hattwick study was to investigate "the possibility that each child's paintings tended to be both individual and directly expressive" and "to see how revealing paintings were of each child's reactions to environment in terms of his own behavior and personality."⁶ The findings of this investigation are highly interesting and suggestive, but the authors warn against their wholesale application. The subjects were 150 nursery school children whose art products for a school year were carefully collected and studied with reference to detailed personality records. Twenty of the subjects were studied for a second year. Five media were considered: easel paints, crayons, clay, blocks, and dramatic play.

The study seemed to justify the conclusion that not only does each child's work show "a highly individual quality," but also that

. . . there is a very general, perhaps universal, tendency for all sorts of individuals to express similar feelings, reactions, and problems in like or at least comparable fashion . . . Apparently, just as creative activity itself springs from some unexplained consistently universal tendency, so the expression of certain universal experiences frequently takes on comparable form.⁷

Should further investigations bear out these conclusions, they would become highly significant for child guidance. As it is, the evidence is more than sufficient to justify teachers of young children in giving careful study to spontaneous art expressions and in providing generous time and facilities for such expression in the school program. The "meaningless daubs," as the earliest paintings of the very young are too frequently labeled, seem to be far from meaningless; they should be accepted as valid expressions, with no attempt made to discourage their continuance. Quoting the study further,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

. . . children can use paints and crayons to express absorbing experiences and preoccupations which they are not yet able to express in words.⁸

. . . though giving the child patterns may improve his form, it is likely to paralyze his creative impulse. . . . Suggestions for change of content or technique are likely to stifle the impulse for self-expression.⁹

Aside from its use as a release or a method of working out specific emotional conflicts, progress in easel painting shows the successive stages found in all expressional activity: pure manipulation for the joy of motor activity and its pleasing result, increasing definiteness and order as coordinations improve and concepts are clarified, use of the medium to express what is *known* and *felt* in more and more orderly fashion, with a tendency to arrange lines and figures in definite design, and more realistic expression with more and more mature use of arrangement.

Wax crayons are a medium on the whole better suited to working out conceptual problems than emotional ones. Alschuler and Hattwick found that the children who preferred crayoning as an activity were in general those who had made good social adaptations and were not disturbed by inner conflict. While easel painting is essentially a solitary activity — Alschuler and Hattwick compare it with bicycle riding in this respect — crayoning is quite sociable, and is generally accompanied by interchange of ideas. Florence Goodenough,¹⁰ recognizing drawing as a method preferred by the child to express that which he knows and therefore indicative of his conceptual development, used the drawing of the figure of a man as a test of general intelligence. She showed that the number of precise details which children include in such a drawing is a valid index of mental maturity. Conforming to the general pattern of expressional activities,

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 164.

¹⁰ Florence Goodenough, *Measurement of Intelligence through Drawings*.

the very immature child produces a scribble if asked to draw a man; the more mature may produce a vague elliptical or rectangular shape, perhaps appending the suggestion of a head, perhaps not. Children whose motor coordinations are well developed and whose conceptual power is steadily developing gradually include the extremities, the features, and various articles of clothing in their drawing. The details which a child has recently discovered and which are therefore important to him are drawn very large, quite out of proportion to the other elements in his picture. Goodenough has contributed a refined scale with scoring directions according to which children's drawings of the figure of a man may be evaluated and translated into terms of mental age and intelligence quotient. Properly administered, the Goodenough Drawing Test yields results correlating serviceably with other measures of intelligence.

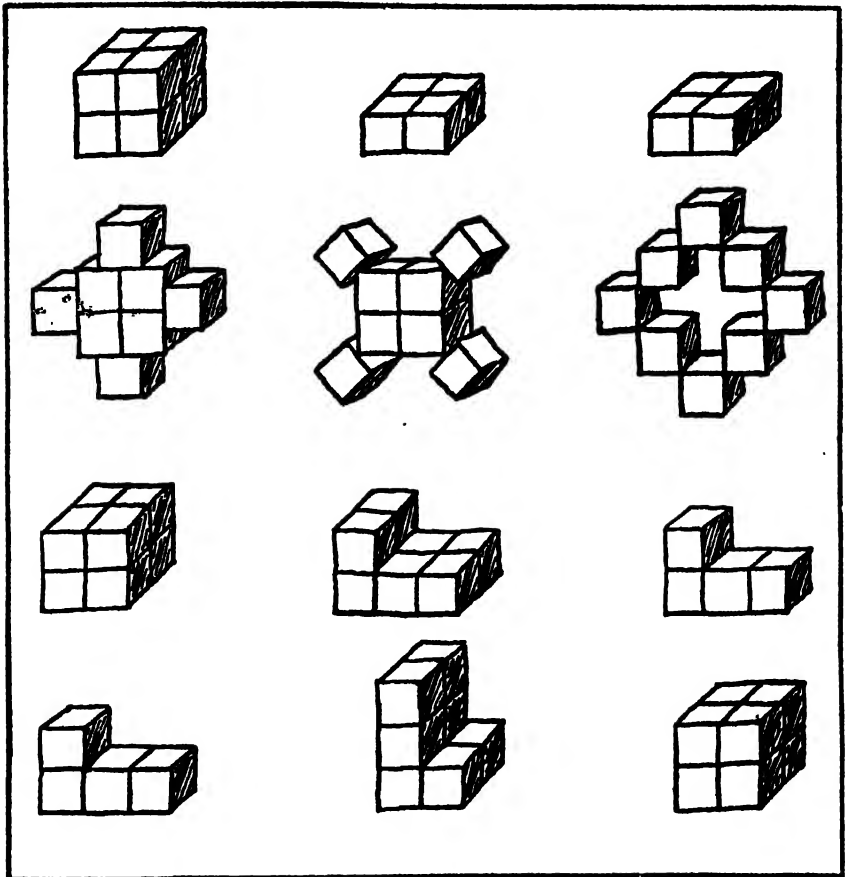
Block Building

The small child's love of blocks led to their early and almost universal acceptance as nursery play equipment. The late-nineteenth-century child had his alphabet blocks and his picture blocks if his parents could afford any play materials whatever. If he were fortunate, he had building blocks of wood and stone as well.

Froebel saw the educational possibilities of blocks, and incorporated them into his gift series; the fact that several of these gifts — the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth — consisted of small building blocks was mentioned in an earlier chapter. In addition to Froebel's conception of the "symbolic" value of these blocks, that is, their representation of order, unity, the "mediation of opposites," and other philosophic concepts, he also emphasized the possibility of teaching arithmetic and geometric concepts in connection with their use. Inasmuch as Froebel failed to grasp the significance of child purpose in education and relied wholly on teacher direction and the passive following of sequential moves, he saw no

need for blocks as a medium for spontaneous expression on the part of the pupil.

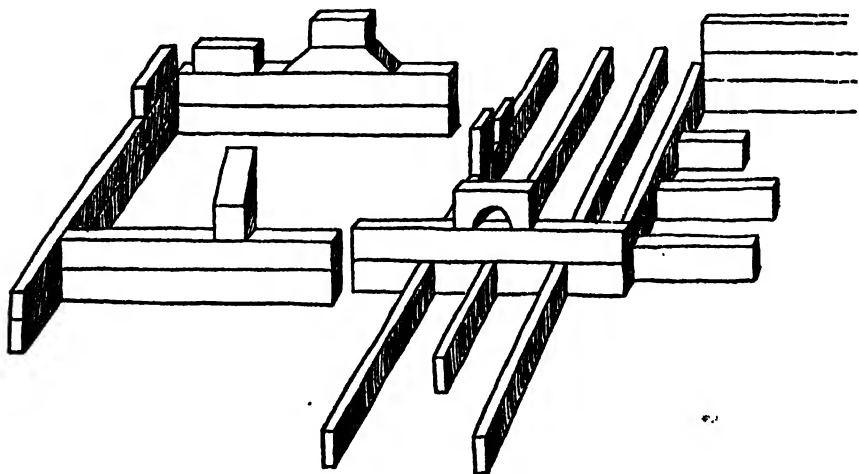
Patty Hill, interested as she was in the development of the child through play activities engaging his whole-hearted interest, experimented with blocks as a means of enhancing



Fröebelian gift sequences showing the beauty sequence and the life sequence as used in the Blow Kindergarten Program for four-year-olds.

dramatic play. The Hill Blocks, large enough to build a play-house or a boat on which a dozen children might "sail," were equipped with grooved corner pieces into which long, rectangular blocks might be fitted to be held in place. Metal rods were also provided, bent at either end and long enough

to extend from one corner piece to the next, thus adding stability to the structure. A two-story house might be built and played in with safety. Block building is essentially a sociable activity, as Alschuler and others have shown, and where Patty Hill Floor Blocks are provided block building often provides the center of a prevailing unit of interest. Fives and sixes build most elaborate structures, fours enjoy hauling them about. The space required to build with them

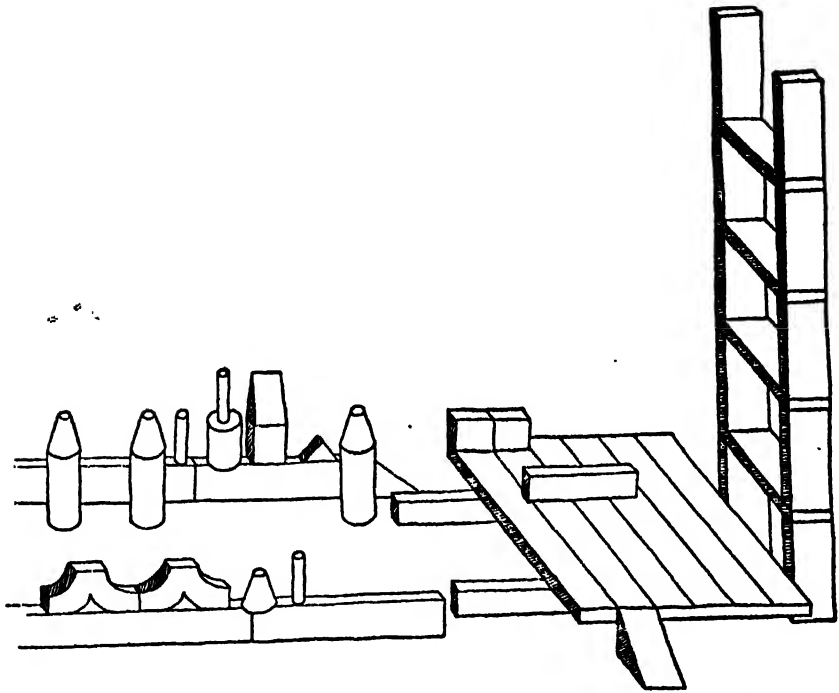


Block building by four-year-olds, 1947: "The United States of America building for trains, trucks, tractors, and automobiles."

and to store them is perhaps the only valid reason for not providing them as standard equipment for kindergarten and first grade.

Meanwhile more than a generation of studying children's block building has led to the development of various assortments of blocks. Medium-sized floor blocks of many shapes for use as expressional material as well as an aid to group dramatic play are now the most widely advocated for nursery and kindergarten equipment. The littlest children use this material for manipulation, just as they experiment with clay and paint and sand. Piling for the pleasure of knocking down appears early. "Sidewalks" and "tracks" generally appear next, and finally organized, planful buildings which

the builders like to talk about and often name. Alschuler, it will be recalled, found that as expressional activity block building was preferred by the more sociable, better organized children among their subjects. Nursery school and kindergarten teachers can furnish ample proof of the variety



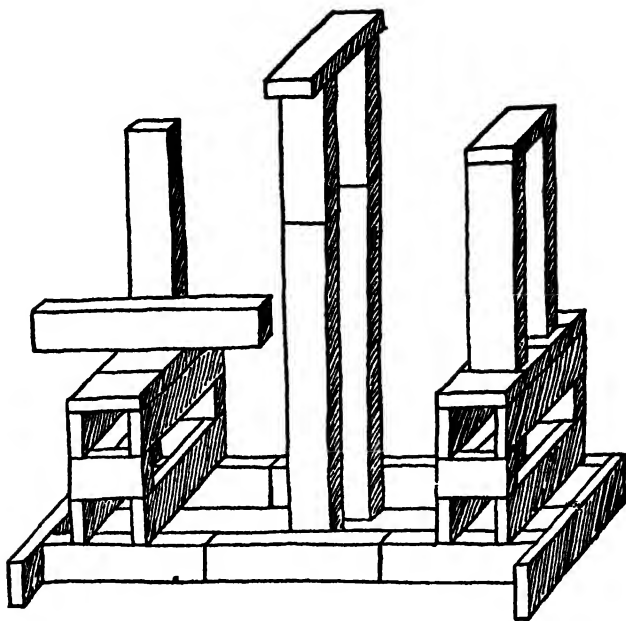
Block building by four-year-olds, 1947: "Staten Island."

and the astonishing realism of little children's block building when an abundance of material is provided and the activity is encouraged. While building is generally a sociable occupation, often involving a working group and a delegation of sidewalk superintendents, it is also a means of individual enjoyment. The solitary block builder, rare at higher age levels, is not infrequent in nursery school.

Applying Art to Daily Living

Art processes directed toward producing things both beautiful and useful for the needs of life have a definite value for

the child who has developed beyond the purely manipulative stages in his use of graphic and plastic media. It is a pleasure to weave a mat for the doll's house, to make doll furniture or even a chair for the child himself to sit upon, to make toys for self and others, to make gifts and decorations in celebration of festivals. Paper cutting, block printing, sewing, work



Block building by four-year-olds, 1947: "Kings County Hospital."

with plaster of Paris and papier mâché and woodwork are all suitable media for these purposes. The value of such work should be carefully determined in the light of the following criteria:

Is the activity the outgrowth of pupil purposing and planning, at least to an appreciable extent?

Can the pupil complete the project himself, without having final touches added by the teacher?

Is the result pleasing to the child? Does the article produced function as was intended? (For example, can the chair be used to play with? Does the rug fit in the doll's house?)

Is the result reasonably durable and attractive, judged by the combined standards of adult and children?

Making useless articles which cannot be played with when finished, producing gifts for mother which are largely the work of the teacher, treating artistic expression as subordinate to the production of commercial decorations — such methods of occupying pupils' time are not defensible in a modern activity curriculum.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CARE OF MATERIALS

The care of materials used in art activities should be a co-operative enterprise planned for by the teacher, in which she takes the lead but by no means does all the work. This responsibility should be regarded as part of the children's education. The degree of ingenuity which must be employed varies with the situation; some classrooms for little children are liberally supplied with cupboards, shelves, running water, oilcloth, and other luxuries; some classrooms are not. The general principles of care are the same, however, regardless of the setting.

Freedom in the use of materials, a minimum of adult warning and suggestion, are important. To this end children should be provided with smocks or coveralls and required to put them on before painting or modeling, if not as a regular routine for all art activities. A supply of newspapers should always be at hand and used liberally to cover floors and tables when clay and paint are being used. If oilcloth is provided for the tables, so much the better, but with young children it is well to cover the floor as well. House-keeping equipment in the way of cloths, small brooms, dustpans, and brushes in good condition should be provided. Young children enjoy their use and soon learn how to use them effectively. When there is no readily accessible running water, plenty of clean water should be available in containers.

Paintbrushes and jars can be kept in condition by all but

the very youngest children, provided the teacher organizes the work and supervises it carefully. The jars should be filled only enough to cover the bristles of the paintbrush, so that paint may be renewed very frequently without undue waste. The brushes should never be left standing in the paint jars. Fingerpaints, either a very expensive item or one which is prepared at the price of some effort, should be dispensed by the teacher. To get the best results, the standard paper provided should be thoroughly wet, and the paint itself thick enough to push about. When the paint is "home-made," the children enjoy watching the process.

Regular furniture or house paint, when used, requires careful supervision; the care of brushes, a very expensive equipment item, must be largely the teacher's job. Turpentine should be liberally provided, as well as clean cloths for removing paint from hands.

Careful care of the clay supply, while a definite chore, is rewarding. Children playing with clay in the *right* condition are a pleasure to watch. When it is too dry or too wet, the activity is far from a joy to supervise. The best results are obtained when the clay, worked and kneaded to good consistency, is wrapped in a damp cloth and kept in a crock. It is well to make a platform of two small pieces of wood at the bottom of the crock on which to rest the clay. After activity with clay, the leftover clay and the pieces which are to be discarded should be worked in together and moistened, so that the material may be used again.

Sand play requires a few rules, depending on the character of the sandbox (indoor or outdoor, level with the ground or raised, provided with a ledge or not). No throwing of sand is a universal rule, enforced from two years up. Keeping the sand *in* the sandbox — a pious hope — is generally insisted upon. A little emphasis helps, but nagging should be avoided. It is fun to move sand around. Dustpan and brush should be used frequently, sand swept up thrown in the dustbin, *not* the sandbox. Sand, a very inexpensive equipment item, should be provided liberally and renewed often. Sand-

boxes should always be equipped with covers when they are on playgrounds, preferably so on roofs and even in classrooms.

Workbenches, when used, must be constantly under the supervision of the teacher. Tools need constant inspection; they should be checked at the end of every hour. Pupil "chairmen" or "captains" or "leaders" may share the responsibility for returning tools to their proper place and may also assist in the general care of materials.

Equipment should be kept so that the children can help themselves to such items as drawing paper, crayons, blunt scissors, toys, housekeeping equipment, and so forth whenever possible. It is well, too, to have clay accessible. A little ingenuity helps; wooden boxes — especially narrow ones to support paint jars — coffee tins, cardboard containers, are very useful accessories in classroom housekeeping. There should be a place for everything, and within reasonable limits at the end of the session everything should be in its place. Children like it.

RHYTHM, MUSIC, AND THE DANCE

The modern music curriculum is based upon the conviction that the appeal of this art is universal among men, that there is no one who may not find satisfaction in some form of musical expression. The teacher of little children is not arbitrarily introducing them to a school "subject" when she sings and plays to them, rather is she responding to their basic needs when she meets their musical sound play with song, their rhythmic stepping or pounding or "hippety-hop" with rhythmic accompaniment. The basic aim of the whole course of study in music is that of developing joy and power in musical expression in all pupils.

Music in the Nursery School

Music may become a natural part of many of the young child's experiences, since tonal play, rhythm, sound, movement, and speech are a part of much that he does. Music

played to accompany spontaneous rhythmic movement such as walking, climbing, running, and jumping adds both to the pleasure and to the control of these activities. A simple song describing what the child is doing at the moment adds greatly to his satisfaction, and may encourage him to further effort and experiment. One has only to observe a group of children at play and listen to their chants and joyful whoops to note how frequently they accompany what they do with sound effects. A song sung by the teacher as Johnny swings higher and higher is much appreciated; a song also helps when he is struggling with his snow-suit zipper or trying to lace his shoe.

"Music Time," when records are played or the teacher plays the piano to accompany a child's rhythm or dance, should be a period of especial enjoyment, which those who want to do so gather in a group to share. There should be no pressure on nursery children to join in this activity beyond an invitation, and those who prefer to play by themselves should be restrained only if they interfere with the fun of music time.

Musical Instruments

A selection of instruments should be provided in the nursery school, and the children encouraged to play with them freely. Drums, cymbals, bells, tambourines, xylophones, and wooden blocks are among those particularly suitable. A few children will enjoy having their rhythmic play accompanied by the piano; in four-year-old groups this interest may result in the beginnings of a "rhythm band." Unless it is to degenerate into mere organized noise, however, making the rhythm band must be an outgrowth of genuine interest on the part of the children, not an exercise imposed by the teacher.

Singing in the Nursery School

The teacher who is possessed of a light, true, singing voice, and who has many short, simple songs in her repertory has a

valuable asset for nursery school work. Children love to be sung to, many of them learn easy songs by rote, and singing is surely an addition to the young child's experience. On the other hand, the nursery school worker who is not so fortunate may still help the group learn to sing. The piano may be used to replace or supplement the teacher's voice, or the children may sing with the victrola. At any rate, the important consideration at this age is not how the children sing but that they find joy in singing.

Music Appreciation

Little children love music and respond to it with enthusiasm. They also love the familiar in music or any other sort of experience. The implications for the beginnings of appreciation are clear: if children are to love good music they must hear it, and the music they will enjoy most is that which has pronounced rhythm to which they can respond with their whole bodies. Gross motor activity is both appropriate to the nursery child and enjoyed by him; such activity accompanied by music is highly pleasurable and one of the greatest aids in the development of motor control.

Rhythm and the Dance

Whenever imagination is strong in their thinking or when their language has a rhythmic beat, little children are apt to add dance, and then their words are sung or "singsonged," and the singing acts as a choric background for their movement. Drama, of course, is always present then, too. One feels that this might have been the way dance began, ages back — that it really was a synthesis of several arts, growing side by side, developing out of the emotional content of the material to be communicated.¹¹

This passage from Dixon's *High, Wide, and Deep* helps to explain the difficulty of discussing the musical, literary, and dramatic experiences of the growing child under separate categories. All are expressions of the child's whole self, each

¹¹ Madeleine Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

is a different facet of one basic reaction. True creative activity in any one of these fields in a sense requires perfect integration of all three. Therefore the guidance of the child in his rhythmic and dramatic expression always requires sensitivity on the part of the teacher. The child integrates his expressional activities in a total organic response; education easily disintegrates and destroys artistic quality in the mistaken effort to develop skills in isolation. Good teaching technique here is distinctly a responsive technique, a recognition of what may be introduced to enhance a total experience rather than improve a specific ability. Dixon's description of her response to little children's dancing is very helpful:

I did two things:

One was to take some motif they had used in spontaneous dance, like a dance they named "the grass cutters," in which they used big sticks. Later I would challenge them all to turns of cutting grass, calling out to this one and that one to be a judge of the rhythms that were "strongest," that were "widest," that went "farthest from high to low," anything to get them to use their bodies for all that was in them. . . .

Beyond that I let them know in every way possible that dance was worth a lot of appreciation. I'd nod approvingly and in some way echo their rhythm. If the dance warranted it, I'd produce a drum, quick as a wink, before they were past needing it. If it seemed that costumes would give a chance for repetition or continuation, I'd announce, "I'm the costume lady, do you need costumes?" I seldom had a refusal there. Then to save them from bungling and struggling long over pins, I'd declare myself "the pinning lady."

Such sensitive responses on the part of an adult represent the kind of teaching that enhances experience, leads activity on to further activity, without endangering the spontaneous quality of the child's expression.¹²

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 144f. Dixon gives an interesting account of the use of the dance by one of the four-year-olds to express, perhaps to resolve strong emotional tension.

Music in the Kindergarten and Early Grades

Singing. The children concerning whom Dixon wrote were four-year-olds and younger. The approach she describes is basic to all good teaching; the extent to which it can be carried through with older pupils depends on the skill of teachers and on the more formal requirements of the school's music curriculum. The Cincinnati *Manual* states,

Singing is the basis for music instruction on the kindergarten-primary level. For the young child, singing is a language of emotional expression, an integral part of his living. . . .

The teacher's responsibility is to help refine the child's musical utterances and to nurture the enjoyment that he gets from expressing feelings and ideas through singing.¹³

Pleasure in singing and the ability to sing well are the stated aims of the kindergarten program.

Modern courses of study emphasize rote singing as the principal activity and pleasure in singing as the aim of music teaching throughout the primary grades. Teachers are expected to work toward reducing the number of children who cannot match sounds, but urged to do this without detracting from sheer pleasure in singing. The introduction of books is recommended by the Cincinnati *Manual* in the latter half of the second grade, provided the children can find the pages and read the word content. Other courses of study defer the use of books until later. All agree that the out-of-tune singer should be given continued help and encouragement, as well as liberal praise for his effort.

Directed Rhythms in the Kindergarten and Primary Grades

Since the innate rhythms of the body and the child's response to these are the origin of all expression, the direction of rhythmic activities is most important. The approach suggested in Dixon's book, ideal for little children, might well be carried on throughout the primary grades with due regard

¹³ Cincinnati Public Schools, *Primary Manual*, p. 208.

for more mature conceptual development and the difference between a group conducted out of doors and one taught in a classroom or gymnasium. The impulse to rhythmic expression, it must be remembered, originates in the child, not in the piano. The form the expression takes should be spontaneous, and the musical stimulus an accompaniment, neither a command nor a cue to a stereotyped response. The teacher's aim should be to help the child express, in more and more controlled and coordinated fashion, his own rhythmic pattern; the music, whether provided by tom-tom or piano, is provided to strengthen and clarify the child's own feeling of rhythm. The teacher also exercises selection by singling out for more deliberate practice those natural movements which have the greatest promise for the development of grace of body.

APPRECIATION

Appreciation develops in the course of expressional activity; it begins in the simple pleasure which the little child feels in beholding bright color, in his sense of personal accomplishment when his scribbling lines begin to take form, when the lines which he paints stand out bright and clear. True appreciation, however, is more than feeling; it involves judgment based on knowledge, and in its mature phase includes genuine intellectual effort to weigh all the elements of what is being appreciated. Appreciations may and should be educated; but attempts to educate them, like all other educational efforts, must wait upon maturation. During the egocentric and self-assertive period of early childhood, premature emphasis on what is pleasing to the beholder may hinder development rather than assist it. The wholly egocentric child is not interested, the child who is self-assertive and eager to do things better than others do may try to please by producing what the adult praises rather than what he himself appreciates. Finding the right moment to say "I like that clear red," "that yellow flower is nicely placed

in your picture," requires psychological insight and fine tact. These beginnings are important. In addition, in their creative work in graphic and plastic arts children should see fine examples of work not too remote from their own in its conception. For instance, the child may, while he draws his forms one next to the other on a horizontal base line, begin to understand and appreciate ancient painting in which this same arrangement is used.

Music appreciation, too, should be related to those elements which we know the child appreciates, above all to rhythm. But gradually, as he develops the ability to listen, he should learn that mere listening, unaccompanied by bodily movement, also gives pleasure.

Our belief that beautiful surroundings affect the young child, enhancing his appreciations, is perhaps naïve. It is a difficult point to prove; we can prove, however, in several different ways, that he loves the familiar. So the argument seems clear: if we wish him to enjoy what is beautiful, we must familiarize him with it by placing him in surroundings which represent the best we know in line, color, and arrangement in music and the dance. His first appreciative responses will show a feeling of pleasure; later he may learn to understand the elements which please him. Just as his first ventures with tools and materials will be for the fun of the activity, his later appreciative and creative experiences will become more and more earnest, requiring the intellectual effort demanded by every true art expression.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the stages in the young child's use of a crayon with the development of language.
2. Summarize and discuss in the light of any experiences you may have had Alschuler's conclusions as to the types of expressional material preferred respectively by anxious and well-adjusted children.

3. List some suggestions which you think would help an inexperienced volunteer in her contacts with a nursery group in the course of the children's expressional activities.
4. Can appreciation be taught? How does intellectual effort enter into the creation or the enjoyment of a painting or a piece of sculpture?
5. State and discuss Dixon's position with regard to the teaching of skills in artistic expression.
6. From the point of view developed in this chapter, how should a kindergarten teacher proceed in developing a "rhythm band"?
7. Many kindergarten teachers motivate the rhythm period by a dramatic play. The children, for instance, go to the park, selecting whether they shall go by trolley or on foot. They go on the merry-go-round, see the animals in the zoo, ride on the ponies. For each activity the teacher plays a suitable musical accompaniment. Discuss this approach in comparison with Dixon's, in the light of the theory accepted in this chapter.
8. What do you think to be the educational value of playing records for young children, encouraging the group to join in by singing or rhythmic movement with the music recorded?
9. Discuss the best method of encouraging children whose musical perceptions are not well developed to join in group singing.
10. Summarize the principles which should guide teachers in their conduct of expressional activities with young children.

Part III

The School as an Agency for Child Guidance

CHAPTER XII

Guiding Personality Development in Early Childhood

The intrinsic charm and goodness of childhood still constitute the best guarantee of the further perfectibility of mankind.

ARNOLD GESELL and FLORENCE ILG ¹

The importance of the earliest years in their effect upon the subsequent development of character and personality is now generally understood. While much may still be done to modify the behavior of older children, adolescents, and young adults, such modifications are relatively superficial since it appears that the true pattern of personality is drawn in infancy and very early childhood. For this reason it is imperative that techniques of guidance in earliest youth be constantly refined and improved, that they be based upon careful study of child nature, and directed toward wisely conceived and realistic ends. One outcome of the new social consciousness concerning the needs and rights of young children is

¹ Arnold Gesell and Florence Ilg, *The Child from Five to Ten*, p. 453.

increased community effort to provide intelligent guidance and advice for their parents. In a period such as the one in which we live, when mental and emotional breakdowns as the result of intolerable pressures are causing great concern, the need for preventive measures, for educating a new generation better able to tolerate things as they are and probably will be, should be apparent to everyone. In the nature of the case, no measure can be so consistently and completely preventive in nature as one directed toward the development of wholesome attitudes in the very young.

CHILD STUDY AS THE BASIS FOR CHILD GUIDANCE

The urgency for the very endurance of our society of providing the best that science can envisage and money can buy for the nurture and guidance of babies and young children has been apparent to intelligent people for many years, but exactly how to proceed and what to do about the situation are still subjects for careful study and experiment. Backed by a science of child development established through a generation of research effort, such study and experiment are now going forward. At the turn of the century, when progressive thinking as we understand it was still in its infancy, Edward L. Thorndike commented on the point that genuine child study required many-sided scientific knowledge; that a true student of children must be erudite indeed. We are now in a better position to recognize the force of this comment than were Thorndike's readers in the early nineteen hundreds. With a great deal of sound information already available, those who know the most about child development realize most keenly how much there is still to know about child guidance procedures. Above all, no thoughtful person is now surprised by the assertion that parents of very little children both need and are entitled to expert help in their guidance of child behavior. This does not mean that parents are to be relieved of their proper duties and

responsibilities; such is by no means the intent of our leading educators. Gesell and Ilg write, "The home is still the primary cultural workshop in which he [the child] learns the alphabet of civilized living; it remains an extremely important workshop even in the years from five to ten." In the tradition of Robert Owen, the English nursery school movement, and our own movement for mental hygiene both past and present, efforts are being directed toward helping parents deal with the vital problem of child rearing, not toward taking this crucial responsibility from them. Meanwhile, it is recognized that both experts and parents need continued child study to provide a sound basis for child guidance. The methods through which this study is carried out are observations, tests, measurements, and projective techniques. Each has its particular role to fill in providing facts about individual children and in adding to the sum total of reliable information.

OBSERVATIONS

Observation is the earliest, the most widely used, and in the long run probably the most valuable method of child study. As a technique it is the simplest and most natural way of learning about child behavior, although from the scientific standpoint it has very serious limitations. Observation cannot but be partly subjective. At least up to a point the observer himself has to *select* what he shall observe and how he shall observe, even if he has been given careful directions in advance, and the observer can hardly escape some interpretation of what he sees. And as he is himself a part of the situation in which he observes, *his* personality cannot but be *projected* in his record of the situation, whether this record be merely preserved in his memory, or be committed to writing, or preserved through a checking system or a graph.

As this technique is used currently, observation is of

several varieties. Undirected observation, the least controlled variety, is not without its uses. Merely spending an hour or so watching a group of young children, without any preconceived intent to look for anything special, is rewarding to a trained observer, to a beginning student, to a parent with no particular interest beyond getting a point of reference from which to regard his own child. Because little children are so charming to watch, observation motivated simply by pleasure and interest yields new understanding of children and results for the most part in very clear and lasting memory of the behavior observed; but such experiences, no matter how delightful, do not result in specific information on important points, except by accident. For such information, directed observation is needed.

Observation may be directed toward the behavior of an individual child,² toward some specific form of behavior, toward the behavior of a group of children³—for instance, block building or quarreling among a group of children⁴—toward the responses of an adult in dealing with various individuals or forms of behavior.⁵ The technique of observing may be left to the individual observer, or two or more people may be subjected to a course of training in observing some one form of behavior under defined situations, with a view to establishing a high degree of accuracy as evidenced by agreement between the observers. Careful definition of terms, careful description of behavior items to be observed, and ingenious methods of recording unquestionably add to the scientific validity of observations. But as Kavin explains,

As examples of highly developed techniques and treatment of data:

² Ruth Andrus, *A Tentative Inventory of Habits of Children Two to Four Years of Age*.

³ Lois Murphy, *Social Behavior and Personality*.

⁴ Arthur T. Jersild and Frances Markey, *Conflicts Between Preschool Children*.

⁵ Madeline H. Appel, "Aggressive Behavior of Nursery School Children and Adult Procedures in Dealing with Such Behavior."

All observational methods present many problems . . . it is difficult to compensate for their subjective nature . . . it is difficult to determine optimal methods of recording observations. . . . Problems of even greater complexity are presented in the tasks of classifying, analyzing, and interpreting what was observed and recorded.⁶

Nevertheless, this writer heartily agrees with Kawin that observation is likely to remain the most widely practiced method of child study among teachers, and that observation of children is indispensable for teachers in training, since it accomplishes what no amount of lecturing can accomplish in acquainting the prospective teacher with children. To quote Kawin again,

Every prospective teacher should be trained to be his own "investigator" of children, since every good teacher must be continuously alert to recognize likenesses and differences in children in all areas of development — physical, intellectual, social, and emotional. . . . To understand and guide any child effectively, the adult who deals with him must first learn to *see* that child in all his uniqueness, recognizing him as a person who must be studied and understood both in terms of his own individual makeup and in his relationship to others.

There is no substitute for direct observation as the foundation for such an understanding of a child.⁷

OBJECTIVE TESTS AND MEASUREMENTS

Objective tests and measurements include all those methods and techniques which have been devised to help psychologists, teachers, and other specialists to estimate the ability and achievement of children with the least possible reference to personal bias. The behavior of the examiner, the method of giving and scoring the test, in fact the whole examination situation is standardized so far as possible in connection with these instruments. As used in the field of

⁶ Ethel Kawin, "Records and Reports, Observations, Tests, and Measurements." N.S.S.E., *Forty-sixth Yearbook*, Part II, Chap. X, p. 304.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

early childhood education, they are of two principal varieties: intelligence tests and readiness tests.

Intelligence tests are designed for use both with individuals and with groups, and designated accordingly as being individual or group tests. The individual examination is the most accurate single measure of the subject's intellectual ability. Tests of this sort should be used only by competent examiners, who, by reason of training and experience, are able to use these instruments with a high degree of precision. Their indiscriminate use by semitrained or untrained persons is not legitimate. If teachers (or, worse yet, ambitious parents) try out intelligence tests on their children, these tests become valueless for use with those same children by an expert. A practice effect resulting from an amateur test may invalidate the result of a legitimately conducted examination given after a short interval.

Intelligence tests purport to measure native intelligence plus those learned reactions which all children have had the same chance to acquire. The best validated according to present standards is the Terman-Merrill Revision of the earlier American revisions of the Binet-Simon. Many readers will be familiar at least with the name of this test. It is an "age scale," consisting of a series of questions and tasks which are expected of children at different age levels. As an instrument for testing in early childhood years it represents a decided advance over earlier revisions: it extends downward to the twenty-four-month level, whereas previous revisions extended only to thirty-six months; it provides for tests at six-month rather than twelve-month intervals up to the age of five; it is much more attractive to little children than the older versions, as it includes the recognition of common objects through miniature toy models, and substitutes the picture of a child for the child himself when the subject is asked to show parts of the body. (Children frequently refuse to respond to any test item which requires the use or designation of any part of their own bodies.) In

accordance with the age-scale method of reporting results, the child's performance level is expressed in terms of mental age. That level at which he passes all the tests and beyond which he has one or more failures at a level is taken as his "basal age." He is given credit in terms of mental-age months for each test passed in the groups above this basal-age group. For instance, if when the full test is administered Mary Smith passes all the tests at the four-year level (forty-eight months), two tests at the fifty-four-month level, and one at sixty months or five years, she is given a basal age of four years and six months, or fifty-four months. Her intelligence quotient or I.Q. is the quotient which expresses the relationship between her chronological and her mental age. Had Mary been four years two months or fifty months chronologically when tested, her I.Q. would have been $\frac{54}{50}$ or 108. (The decimal point is omitted in expressing the I.Q.) Had she been exactly four years six months old, her I.Q. would have been 100. Had she been four years eight months old when tested, her quotient would be $\frac{54}{59}$ or 92. All this is probably well known even to the beginning student of education; but it seems again and again expedient to indicate that the I.Q. is not a *fixed quantity* but a *measure of relationship*.

The giving of an individual test such as the Terman-Merrill is time-consuming, even if the shorter rather than the longer form provided for is used. During early childhood years, the technique of testing by such an instrument is difficult. While the tests are much more interesting than formerly, they are not all especially appealing to the young child. The small client is far too immature socially to care about results or to deign to answer or even consider an item which bores him. There is no provision for refusals on this test; if the child won't the examiner has to assume he can't. It does not take much imagination to see what a few "won'ts" might do to an intelligence rating on an age scale.

In order to get a valid result in the use of the age scale,

it is necessary to maintain standard conditions and follow standard procedure. The examiner is cautioned against "unintentionally and unconsciously introducing variations which will affect the subject's response,"⁸ even while he is strongly urged to establish and maintain the best possible rapport, "adapting himself to new situations and meeting emergencies."⁹ The general instructions for giving the test do not give hard and fast rules for conducting the examination with young children, but clearly state that "it cannot be emphasized too strongly that it must be a standardized, controlled experiment with the procedure as rigidly adhered to as possible."¹⁰ Varying the order of the tests given is permissible in using the Revision; the goal, however, is "to leave no test which the child has not attempted," a goal sometimes very difficult of achievement.

The Terman-Merrill test provides a wider range of possible responses than did the earlier Stanford revisions. For instance, at four years the child may be exposed to as many as 30 tests if the examiner sees fit before taking him on to the next level, whereas former revisions provided only 12 such tests. Nevertheless the range of opportunity to show what he can do is still fairly narrow in the case of the young child, when Terman-Merrill is used.

In order to meet the need for testing instruments suitable for very little children several interesting preschool tests have been devised which are "performance tests" in the sense that they give the subject the opportunity to do things, to manipulate and explore much more than is the case with the Terman-Merrill material. Updegraff at Iowa, Stutsman at Merrill-Palmer, Anderson at Minnesota, have worked at the standardization of such tests. These employ picture puzzles, various "games" of inserting blocks of different shapes and

⁸ Lewis Terman, and Maud A. Merrill, *The Measurement of Intelligence*, p. 53.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

sizes into form boards, matching games, blocks, and other devices. The performances are standardized at half-yearly levels, and the results expressed in terms of percentile rank, that is, the position of the individual child among any theoretical group of one hundred children his own age. If Mary is given a percentile rank of 98 it means that her score would be equaled or excelled by only two out of every hundred children. This percentile rank of 98, which is a superior rating, must on no account be confused with an I.Q. of 98, which is only an average rating. The scores are also expressed in terms of "standard deviation," another statistical device for expressing a child's ability not in terms of I.Q., but by indicating his position in a group of children his own age.

Performance tests such as the Minnesota Scale, the Van Alstyne, the Merrill-Palmer, are interesting and appealing to children; the number of refusals are accordingly fewer, and the examiner has the chance to see the child as he plays naturally and not self-consciously, with his mind off himself and on his task. Because of the interest and variety of these tests, the examiner is able to get a much better picture of the child's total personality than would usually be possible in giving a Terman-Merrill. What a child's attitude toward work is — whether he is self-critical to a normal or exaggerated degree, whether his interest span is characteristically long or short, how he reacts toward failure — all these observations are made more easily when the specially designed preschool performance tests are employed. Much wider latitude is permitted the examiner in the conduct of the examination; the situations are not rigidly standardized. Therefore the child is likely to be at his best; but on the other hand subjectivity on the part of the examiner may enter in to a greater degree than in a more controlled situation.

Because of the variety of responses tested at each age level and the well-planned clinical procedure, the Gesell scale is a particularly rewarding method of testing young chil-

dren. Dr. Gesell holds that the course of growth can be predicted in earliest childhood, stating that "Where there is a fairly even balance between endogenous and the sustaining or exogenous factors, the trends of mental growth, whether subnormal, superior, or mediocre, are likely to be most consistent."¹¹

Of late, however, the predictive value of intelligence tests given to little children has been seriously challenged by many investigators. Anderson, for example, states that "pre-school intelligence tests, while they are instruments of some value and usefulness, measure only a portion of that function. Whether it would be possible to develop tests at these levels which measure more of that function remains to be seen."¹² Goodenough, basing her statement on empirical evidence, is cited by Kawin as saying,

. . . the younger the child at time of testing, the less accurate will be the prediction of later status from earlier status, with an absence of relationship between mental-test standing before the age of 18 months and later test performance. "After the appearance of speech, the tests begin to have predictive value, although the amount of confidence that can be placed in the results as indices to the child's ultimate level of development continues to be small up to the age of four or five years."¹³

Hallowell, on the contrary, on the basis of a study of 250 children first tested at one, two, or three years and retested at from five to thirteen years, reports that the "validity correlations of a three-year group, secured from preschool tests and later Binet and performance tests, are very similar to

¹¹ Leonard Carmichael, ed., *Manual of Child Psychology*, pp. 326-327. Cited by Ethel Kawin, *op. cit.*

¹² "The Limitations of Infant and Preschool Tests in the Measurement of Intelligence," *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. VIII, pp. 351-379. Cited by Ethel Kawin, *op. cit.*

¹³ Florence Goodenough. "Bibliographies in Child Development: 1941-1943," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. XLI, pp. 615-633, November, 1944. Cited by Ethel Kawin, *op. cit.*

correlations reported for older and school age children.”¹⁴

The predictive value of preschool tests is thus open to serious question. Kawin concludes that they had best be given toward the end of the period, since reliability and validity increase with age.

READINESS TESTS

The determination of the pupil's readiness to learn in a specified curriculum area as a preliminary to trying to teach him is an important and recent emphasis in education. Like many other departures, this too originated in the field of early childhood education, especially in connection with efforts to determine readiness for reading. The percentage of first-grade failures, the number of children whose school morale received a shattering blow at the outset because they were left back while many of their classmates were promoted to the second grade, came to be a matter of great concern to progressive educators by the middle 1920's. Some private schools solved the problem by permitting pupils to advance on their general maturity rather than their reading ability, but the public school systems, with the administrative problems of mass education as well as considerable prejudice to contend with, were for the most part not in a position to adopt this solution. Intelligent efforts to study the situation soon showed that initial failures to read were partly due to the mental immaturity of the pupils; many five-and-a-half and six-year-old first graders were found not to be five-and-a-half and six mentally when they were examined by means of intelligence tests. By 1930¹⁵ the opinion that a mental age of at least six-and-a-half was the optimum

¹⁴ D. K. Hallowell, "Validity of Mental Tests for Young Children," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, Vol. LVIII, pp. 265-288, 1941. Cited by Ethel Kawin, *op cit*.

¹⁵ Mabel Morphett and Carleton Washburne, "When Should Children Begin to Read?" *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 29, pp. 496-503, March 1931.

maturity level for beginning to learn reading had gained considerable support, and mental age rather than chronological age was considered both in grade placement and curriculum planning for the early childhood area.

Meanwhile, intensive studies in the field of reading were revealing the complexities of the reading process, and demonstrating that readiness to make satisfactory progress in learning to read was dependent upon many factors rather than one or two. One authority, M. Lucile Harrison,¹⁶ classified these factors under three major categories; intellectual development, including mental age, ability to remember word forms, competence in abstract thinking; physical development, including general health, vision, hearing; personal development, including emotional stability and desirable attitudes and habits needed for adjustment to the school situation. Reading ability is thus shown to depend upon native ability, maturation or the growth level attained by this native ability, environment and experience, motivation, the social factor of living in a group in which there is greater or less need for reading, and strong or weak pressure both from adults and the child's peers to learn how to read.

At present the tendency is to accept the verdict of "ready" or "not ready" as determined by readiness tests as the criterion for placing pupils in reading or nonreading groups; in groups beginning formal number work or others in which such work is given incidentally through an experience curriculum; in groups in which writing begins to receive some stress or classes in which this is not the case. The high predictive value of readiness tests — especially reading readiness tests, which actually are the most generally employed — is unquestioned, but as Kawin emphasizes in her article in the *Forty-sixth Yearbook* of the N.S.S.E.,¹⁷ the results of classifying children on the basis of them will be good only if active means are taken to *develop* readiness in the unready.

¹⁶ M. Lucile Harrison, *Reading Readiness*.

¹⁷ Ethel Kawin, *op. cit.*

Even though there is good evidence to show that abilities associated with sensory motor functions are indeed dependent upon maturation, which must wait upon growth, many other important factors may be improved through education. Emotional stability and desirable habits and attitudes needed for the school situation (to cite Harrison's list), above all interest in learning to read, while *not entirely independent of maturation*, emphatically may be developed and improved by guidance and wisely planned experiences. The intelligent classroom teacher knows that she can do nothing to hasten the maturation of visual abilities, but that she can do much to develop interest in reading. Emotional stability or ability in abstract thinking may grow very slowly in some pupils because of innate factors which are independent of the home and school environment and not susceptible of change, but there is evidence to show that stimulation and encouragement help even the slowest children in developing these important qualities. Nonreading first-grade groups and pre-primary classes should be provided with definite teaching and a stimulating school environment designed to develop those factors in reading readiness which may be improved through education. A nonreader is not a "case" which indicates passive waiting for nature to take her course, but a challenge to the school and to the home. These considerations hold not only for reading but for all other curriculum areas as well.

Standardized tests and readiness tests are not the only techniques of measurement used in early childhood education. Height and weight are recorded at intervals as a matter of standard practice; other physical measurements are often part of laboratory school routine. Measurement in terms of what most children of a given age can do, a method of which Gesell is the leading exponent, is widely used for children of preschool age. Gesell repeatedly cautions against the rigid use of norms as measuring devices, emphasizing the point that each child has his own "tailor-made growth

pattern" because each individual is unique. For purposes of guidance it is this uniqueness which should be discovered. When traits in which he varies from the norm indicate handicaps, the school and the home try to do everything possible to help the child overcome the effects of these undesirable differences; when the variation indicates special ability, the same agencies should seek to afford it the fullest possible development.

Personality, because of its nonquantitative nature, defies measurement, but some of the techniques for estimating the strength of the several traits which make up personality have been adapted for use with children of kindergarten and primary age. The California Test of Personality, for example, is developed in five series, ranging from kindergarten to maturity. Designed to detect personal and social maladjustment, it is a helpful instrument for use during the later period of early childhood education.

PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

Observations as well as tests of mental ability or readiness, personality scales and inventories, are techniques of directly studying overt behavior. Of recent years it has become increasingly apparent to psychologists and psychiatrists that such instruments, even if more highly perfected than they are at present, would still tell only part of the story. The subject of the test, child or adult, is studied in a situation which is arranged, planned, and as completely standardized as possible by another person. How he would respond were he to arrange the situation is not revealed. Confronted with a form board, he fits the pieces into their proper places or he does not; asked to match two sets of pictures, the examiner is able to record that he matched three out of twelve, or ten out of twelve, or that he did nothing at all; asked what he would do if he had broken something belonging to someone else, he remains silent, or gives an unsatisfactory answer, or comes upon the right answer because he knows the con-

ventional response and is willing to produce it. How he feels about form boards or pictures or hypothetical moral questions may be partially surmised by the examiner. What these materials and situations mean *to him*, what if anything he would like to *do to* the form board or the pictures is not apparent, unless he is violent and throws them — which has general interest value but no accurate diagnostic value — is not apparent. Nor does the examiner know beyond a guess what the subject privately thinks and feels about examiners, tests, or life in general. In fact, the private individual with his private likes, loves, hates, prejudices — his whole private store of meanings — is inaccessible because there is practically nothing in form boards or matching pictures or hypothetical questions requiring “correct” answers which challenges or makes possible the expression of private meanings. The subject merely shows or tells the examiner what he wants to tell, or what he is *able to reveal* through words or through stereotyped tasks with formed, standardized materials. It takes little imagination to see that all this leaves out the things he doesn’t want to do and say and the things he probably cannot do and say because of the emotional blocking from which no one, no matter how well adjusted, is entirely free.

Some years ago Lawrence K. Frank introduced the term “Projective Methods” for techniques of testing or examining a personality through encouraging the subject to divulge his private meanings and through noting how he “organizes or gives meanings to unorganized or unconventionalized situations.” A form board is certainly organized and conventional; so are sets of pictures which require matching, so are questions about what is to be done in an ethical situation, asked by an adult who knows you have been to school. An ink blot is not organized: it suggests “this to me, that to thee.” When you talk about an ink blot, when you are asked to tell what it looks like, if you talk at all you have to give your private meanings.

In a scholarly article¹⁸ on the subject of projective methods, Frank wrote,

. . . the dynamic conception of personality as a process of organizing experience and structuralizing life space in a field leads to the problem of how we can reveal the way an individual personality organizes experience, in order to disclose or at least gain insight into the individual's private world of meanings, significances, patterns, feelings.

As will be apparent, the figure "structuralizing life space in a field" is an apt application of the terminology of modern physics in the area of psychology. A "projective method," the article goes on to explain, would "require the individual to organize a field presented to him which has little structure." The individual, in such a technique, is invited to impose his own structure, thus revealing his own "private, idiosyncratic meaning and organization."

The Rorschach Test, known to many as a set of plates showing forms suggesting standardized ink blots, is probably the best known of such projective methods, but this technique, according to authorities in the field, is not yet ready for general use with young children. The Rorschach patterns have so far been validated for the most part on the reactions of adults and on clinical data from psychiatric patients. As Hertz¹⁹ indicates, "Adult reactions may not be valid for children's reactions. Certainly we have no right to assume that patterns validated on psychiatric material apply likewise to children."

Until this material has been thoroughly tried out and validated for preschool and early grade children, it is thus of little value in connection with the problems of early childhood education. But the Rorschach is not the only projective method available; there are others, perhaps more

¹⁸ Lawrence K. Frank, "Projective Methods for the Study of Personality," *Journal of Psychology*, Vol. VII, pp. 389-413, 1939.

¹⁹ Marguerite R. Hertz, "Rorschach: Twenty Years After," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. XXXIX, October, 1942.

immediately useful because they make use of the ordinary activities of children in the home and school. The child's performances with clay, for instance, are revealing — as Alschuler, Lowenfeld, and others have shown. Frank calls clay modeling a "constitutive response," because in using it the person gives his private structure to an "amorphous, plastic, unstructured substance" — clay. Or the subject may be asked to tell what a picture means to him: "Tell me a story about this picture." Children are quite accustomed, usually, to talking about pictures. They respond well to the request to give a particular picture their own plot or story. Play techniques have now been rather widely publicized; Frank classifies these as "cathartic," since they invite a discharge of feeling in the play situation. Building with any manner of building material is also indicative of individual pattern and organization. The use of painting as a means of achieving private organization, and a discharge of feeling as well, is thoroughly discussed in Alschuler and Hattwick's *Painting and Personality*, quoted at length in Chap. XI.

Teachers of little children should be informed concerning the uses of these projective techniques and intelligent in noting their pupils' use of toys and materials; they should, however, be conservative in interpretation, or, better still, leave interpretation to the expert. It should also be remembered that projective methods are used for a double purpose: for the study of a personality and for therapy. The play therapist of today is a specialist trained in the use of play as therapy. A skillful teacher, by providing materials, refraining from interference, occasionally injecting a helpful comment, may well help the nursery or kindergarten child to work out many of his troubles through his play. In so doing, she is accomplishing therapy, but she is not a therapist in the exact sense, nor can any classroom situation be exactly like a "play hour," since the teacher can seldom be as wholly permissive in her attitude as the therapist. The teacher's responsibility for her class, both to the school and

to the children's parents, is different from that of the therapist, and her behavior must differ accordingly no matter how slightly.

THE USE OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE PRACTICE OF GUIDANCE

All the observations written up, all the tests ever standardized, all the studies ever made are of little or no avail if the results are not used in the guidance of children. Such guidance runs all the way from the day-by-day management of the nursery baby to recommendations for psychological study or psychiatric care in the case of the disturbed primary school pupil, or the recommendation of special opportunity and schooling for the child whose musical or artistic ability borders on genius. To knowledge there must be added tact and a never-failing respect for the individual's growing competence to guide himself.

The following instance of guidance in the ordinary run of nursery school procedure is taken from Dorothy Baruch's delightful book, *Parents and Children Go to School*.²⁰

"Come on up," Patsy is calling down to George from the top of the jungle gym.

Mary Ellis can predict George's reply — "I can't."

He never can, or rather can but thinks he can't. He has an older sister at home, three years older, a marvelously capable, brilliant child. Naturally he cannot compete. He does not want to. "I can't," his constant refrain, carries over from his three years at home into the preschool.

Mary Ellis sits down beside him, an arm around his shoulders. "Why George," she says, wrinkling up her nose and grinning. He grins back. "Is sister good at climbing?" she asks in a low, confidential tone. "Awful good," George confides. "That doesn't matter," Mary Ellis says reassuringly. She is glad he is facing it. "You can climb, too. It doesn't matter if you don't do it as well as sister. She is *lots* older and bigger, you know. She can climb better than you, just as you climb better than Buster over there." She points over the fence to the yard where the two-year-olds are playing.

²⁰ Dorothy Baruch, *Parents and Children Go to School*, p. 394.

Simple, everyday procedure, but based on much sure knowledge of child development, and careful observation of George. The incident illustrates, too, the need for supplementing daily observations at school with understanding of what goes on at home. As much knowledge of the child's out-of-school life as possible, and of the influences which have surrounded him since his birth and are continuing to surround him, is most important for intelligent guidance.

Illustrations of cases in which teachers and school directors have been able to guide children in the light of their understanding of these children's abilities, difficulties, and home surroundings may be multiplied. Baruch's book, *Andrus's Curriculum Guides for Teachers of Children Two to Six Years of Age*, and the companion volume, *Curriculum Guides for Teachers of Children Six to Eight*, provide a wealth of day-by-day examples. A brief summary of a more complicated long-range guidance problem is the following:

Mary, aged eight, in a slow third grade was making little progress and was reported by her teacher as being sulky, unfriendly, and inclined to impertinence. When Mary was suspected of stealing Red Cross money from another child, the matter came to the principal's attention. Mary's mother, called by the principal, sought advice from a friend trained in child guidance. A study of Mary yielded an I.Q. of 120, a great interest in looking at pictures with lovely color and good arrangement, unusually good ability in drawing and easel painting, indifferent reading skill, and absent arithmetical knowledge. She actually bubbled over with enthusiasm on the subject of painting. The oldest of four, Mary had been made something of a drudge at home. Her mother had, however, noticed she liked to draw, and admitted the little children usually tore up Mary's products.

Mary's teacher, too, had noticed that her "art work" was very good — better than any other child in the room. But they had little time for art — the grade was large and dull.

The principal was interested in the report on Mary. She showed enthusiasm for Mary's pictures. The little girl moved

to an accelerated third grade, in spite of her poor reading and number ability, because the grade was smaller and the teacher more sympathetic. A "teacher in excess" who was doing remedial work in the school was assigned to give Mary special help. Coveted paint brushes and tempera paint were provided for home use; mother agreed to give Mary a spot where her work would be out of Junior's four-year-old reach. As soon as the reading was up to grade standard — which was very soon indeed — special art lessons were provided weekly. Mary was soon on the high road to success as an elementary school child doing satisfactory school work and making good progress in the development of a special gift. Her social adjustment improved rapidly; she was accepted in her new group, liked her teacher, and began to extend herself pleasantly both in school and at home.

This good adjustment, achieved in a few months' time, illustrates what can be done by very simple procedures based on an understanding of children, a study of an individual child, and the friendly cooperation of a good public school.

Readjustments, either complete or partial, following long periods of play therapy, psychiatric interviews, or even hospitalization, are now frequently reported. So are better health and improved behavior following adequate care for sight and hearing deficiencies or other physical handicaps. In all this preventive and remedial activity, workers in the area of early childhood have an important part to play.

CLASSIFICATION OF PUPILS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Since the beginning of the use of standardized tests, the question of how to classify pupils in our larger schools has received a great deal of attention. The ever-present problem of the too heavy pupil load per teacher has suggested to many administrators the possibility of making the load easier by "homogeneous grouping" on the basis of mental age or of intelligence quotient. From the democratic point

of view in educational philosophy, this method has been criticized consistently as providing the wrong sort of group experience: we live in a mixed world, and the child of 130 I.Q. and above should learn to cooperate happily with his schoolmate of 90 or thereabouts. On the other hand, it has been shown that not only the teacher but also the children suffer in large classes where the intelligence range is a wide one. Most teachers tend to devote a disproportionate amount of time to the slower pupil, partly because of anxiety that he will not finish his work and that the teacher's technique will be criticized, partly because of a more generous spirit characteristic of our profession, which is an honest concern for the child who is having difficulty, especially if he "tries hard." Brighter pupils therefore waste a great deal of time, and develop habits of laziness and a know-it-all attitude because it is so easy to do nothing and yet manage to shine. For this reason it has generally seemed practical in large school systems to classify little children when they enter first grade, at least very tentatively, in the interest of all concerned.

The practical difficulties in the way of this efficient classification are many. Most serious is the effect upon the children in the slower groups, especially those who almost qualify for a rapid class. School administrators have grown more sensitive to this and teachers more understanding as time went on; efforts are made to camouflage the arrangements as far as possible, and to help parents adopt a constructive attitude toward the plan in cases where classification is inimical to the family pride; however, this still remains a human objection: the camouflage is never complete, and the sense of hurt is only partly overcome in many cases.

Another practical difficulty, fully recognized more recently, is that homogeneous classification on the basis of intelligence leaves a heterogeneous group, after all. Readiness, for instance, enters in most strikingly; so do social adjustment and emotional stability and all the other factors now recognized

as important contributors to school success. A group of first-grade entrants with intelligence ratings of 115 to 125 may represent all stages of readiness and social and emotional adjustment. A few years ago the suggested democratic solution was to permit heterogenous classes, encourage the teacher to provide an enriched curriculum for the bright pupils, and labor to realize only minimum essentials with the dullest. Unfortunately, our large classes have made this suggestion an unattainable counsel of perfection. It represents a sound, democratic attitude; but no teacher with a class of thirty to forty to fifty children can carry it out. There seem to be just two possible solutions: either drastic reduction of pupil load, or classification on an adequate concept of what constitutes homogeneity — that is, classification on the basis of a study of the child's whole development, and governed by the best known principles of child guidance. Such classification would cause far less personal hurt, because social maturity and interests would play so large a part in determining placement. In addition, the honest application of child guidance principles would leave classification flexible; the child who found himself in the least mature of the first-grade groups would not remain so classified for the rest of his school career unless careful study of his attainment and adjustment warranted it.

The continued study of child development and the refinement of techniques of guidance in early childhood carry the most hope for continued improvement in the quality of modern education. Such study and experiment must be recorded as it progresses for the benefit of school administrators, teachers, parents, and the general public, so that it may be studied, criticized, and continually improved. Child guidance is not a panacea, but if it is based not on one method of study but on several methods, and carried out not as a routine but as a highly individualized form of social and educational service, it should contribute substantially toward the solution of some of the most pressing social problems.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Observe a group of children at play. Estimate the age of the group. Is the play social, gregarious, or parallel? Describe the play activities.
2. From the point of view of the children, was the play fun? From the adult standpoint, was it wholesome and worth while in promoting growth? What did you yourself gain from this observation?
3. Explain the concepts I.Q., mental age, homogeneous grouping, as you would to an intelligent adult unfamiliar with this terminology.
4. What is the difference in reliability as between group and individual intelligence? What are the practical reasons for employing group tests in the field of early childhood education?
5. If an intelligence quotient supplied to you does not agree with your considered opinion about the child in question, what additional information would you wish to secure?
6. Should parents be told the intelligence quotients of their children? Teachers of their pupils? Debate these questions.
7. Discuss the advantages of readiness tests. Review the essential abilities and maturities required in learning to read and write.
8. To what extent may readiness be hastened by a good educational situation? Explain, as to an intelligent parent.
9. Examine Axline's book on play therapy. Describe the attitude of the therapist in a nondirected play situation.
10. What essential differences do you see between the freely organized classroom and the playroom? What are the differences in responsibilities as between therapist and classroom teacher?

CHAPTER XIII

Records and Reports

Observations, tests, measurements, and the forms in which they are recorded and reported are not *ends* in themselves; they are *means* to ends, instruments for the attainment of important purposes.

ETHEL KAWIN ¹

When schools were concerned merely with providing a literary education, records were not difficult to keep. Enrollment and attendance were recorded in the teacher's roll book, which, once compulsory education was in force, became a legal document. Progress was recorded in terms of passes and failures, expressed in the form of per cent or some arbitrary system of literal classification; promotion or nonpromotion was justified by marks, and the teacher's arbitrary judgment or the principal's ultimatum was delivered to the pupil and his parents with little benefit of explanation. Reports sent home in the course of the school term were of the briefest and most succinct, showing nothing beyond the facts that children were passing, failing, or distinguished in their school work, and that individual conduct was good, bad, or indifferent.

¹ Ethel Kawin, N.S.S.E., *Forty-sixth Yearbook*, p. 281.

As time went on the progress of health legislation and gradually increasing interest in the physical hygiene of school children demanded the recording of vaccination, physical examinations, and the recommendation of school physicians and nurses; these data were collected and commonly preserved in the form of a cumulative record card passed on from grade to grade, or, in cases of transfer, from school to school. Often the material as recorded was intelligible only to the person writing it upon the child's card, and the whole process of entering and recording information on health was perfunctory in the extreme.

Significant changes in the whole character and quality of school records followed inevitably upon the acceptance by the school of broader responsibilities for child training and child welfare. Once the growth of the whole child as a member of society became the school's recognized aim, many facts other than those relating to attendance and absence and promotion and failure became of interest to the school personnel; the need for more descriptive data about individuals and groups was acutely felt. The increasing use of standardized tests of intelligence and achievement demanded some more satisfactory variety of cumulative record; where curriculum revision was undertaken, more systematic descriptions of classroom activities were needed. Not all schools immediately succeeded in keeping pace with the times in the matter of keeping records, just as not all of them kept abreast of the new curriculum, but in the course of the last twenty years most good schools have demanded that the administrative and teaching staffs devote a considerable amount of time and energy to the development, improvement, and refinement of a variety of records. Meanwhile the movement for child guidance has created new pressure for adequate records, and the nursery school has been of considerable influence in setting standards with respect to recording for the whole area of early childhood education.

While data should never be regarded as ends in themselves, they are indispensable means of implementing an intelligent guidance program. The private practitioner, psychologist, or psychiatrist, the staff of the child guidance clinic, school administrators and school faculties, have all come to rely upon a wealth of recorded data as the basis for conference with parents, for professional discussions with other workers, for deciding upon questions of classification and promotion, as well as for giving the individual pupil help in making decisions which affect his educational and vocational future. Records are also important for research purposes; in fact Kavin distinguishes "service" and "research" as the two principal aims of record keeping.

THE QUALITIES OF GOOD RECORDING

To be of service in child guidance school records must have the following characteristics: (1) They must cover a wide variety of behavior and achievement; they must also include relevant data concerning home and family background. (2) Recording must be full enough to be meaningful, but not so voluminous that the reader is unable to distinguish the woods because of all the trees. (3) Records should be as free as possible from the individual bias of the recorder, and a careful distinction should be made at all times between fact and opinion. (4) Records should be strictly confidential, accessible only to workers who need the material in order to work intelligently. Certain data should be available only to the responsible director of the school guidance program, who may in turn divulge to other school officers such information as he deems expedient when the need arises.

Matter to be Recorded

Every child should have a cumulative record folder which ideally should contain data from his nursery school career to his graduation from school or college. This record should

include family and personal data obtained when he is first enrolled and rechecked annually for important changes. Among these changes to be noted are the birth of siblings, the loss of a near relative by death, drastic changes in the economic status of the home, any untoward event which might seriously affect the individual.

Records of tests and the reactions of the examiners administering these, as well as reports of scholastic achievement, should of course be included, but data should be evaluated for consistency, and intelligent comments entered when consistency seems lacking. A candidate for a higher degree, interested in records as a thesis subject, went to the elementary school he himself had attended and as a matter of professional interest asked to see his school record. The principal was cordial, the clerk hunted up his card but she seemed hesitant about giving it to him. "Do you really want it?" she asked. "Of course!" The I.Q. entered during his first year at school was 75. Judging by the pupil's present educational status, this was certainly inconsistent with his school success.

When such procedures have been needed, psychiatric advice, records of psychiatric interviews, play therapy, its course and outcome, should be included in a complete biographical record. This material, as well as confidential facts about families, should be classified as highly confidential, however, and be accessible only to the responsible guidance officer.

Anecdotal records, contributed each year by the pupil's class teacher, may also constitute valuable data. If made carefully and passed on from year to year, such records should be very helpful to each successive teacher. Experience shows, however, that at present anecdotal records are by no means uniform in value, and that the attitudes of some teachers toward recording anecdotes still leave much to be desired. First of all, to be helpful this material must be completely free from personal bias which is not honestly

labeled as such. No teacher can write up good anecdotal records and keep herself out of the picture, because she is in a sense part of the anecdote. But she can distinguish between what she thinks, divines, and surmises, and what she knows. Then too there seems to be some hesitancy about passing on, from kindergarten to first grade, to second and third, information which will *prejudice* succeeding teachers. Undoubtedly this hesitancy is sometimes justified, but it still shows an unhealthy condition, which can only be cleared up by improved professional morale. For the comfort of those who hesitate, a considered comment is still less damaging than careless lunch-time gossip, by no means currently extinct. Finally, with a great deal of justice public school teachers groan at the prospect of *more* clerical work. This is a matter for administrative adjustment; the suspicion that it can only be alleviated by decreasing the pupil load seems justified.

THE LENGTH AND COMPLEXITY OF RECORDS

Too elaborate records defeat their own purpose; the mass of detail tends to obscure the important points. One might ask, "How is importance to be estimated?" A precise answer is not possible, but it may be suggested that an item is important according to what the recorder knows about the whole personality of the child whose behavior is being recorded. One more aggression on the part of a child recognized as a problem in this respect may be a most important indication that something drastic in the way of therapy is needed. On the part of a child who never asserts himself, the same aggression would be an important positive point; he is learning to be more assertive. There are other cases in which the matter would be too insignificant to be worth noting at all. So the inevitable personal element, the *selection* of material, cannot be excluded. But the very fact that a certain happening *seemed* important to the teacher *makes* it important for her in that situation, so most such items

deserve recording, even with a reservation for personal bias.

The mechanical question of keeping material within reasonable bounds is partly answered by studying the many excellent record forms now used in nursery, kindergarten, and early grades in our public and private schools. According to whether the purpose is research *and* guidance, or research in the hope of improving guidance, or just guidance, each school may well organize its own modified record form.

REDUCING THE PERSONAL ELEMENT

Intelligent recorders try to understand themselves and check the validity of their opinions. For one thing, the good recorder of anecdotes learns to allow for the factors of recency and special circumstances. If something spectacular in the way of antisocial behavior happens on June 15, when the pressures associated with the end of the term are high, probably it had better not be sent on with the cumulative record June 20, *unless* this behavior is of a piece with the whole behavior picture of the pupil. One method of checking objectivity and accuracy is by way of still another form of record taking, this time in one's private notebook or on a scratch-pad. Jimmy hits Johnny, Johnny's nose bleeds, the whole class is very interested in the gory affair. Miss Smith, her hands full of a variety of problems and annoyances, says to herself: "Jimmy is *always* hitting people." When the face is washed, the affair settled, and the children are quieted down, Miss Smith may well ask herself, "*Is* Jimmy always quarreling? Or is Johnny an irritating, provocative child? Johnny certainly gets into a lot of trouble." At this point it is well to jot down *any* significant occurrence involving either small boy for a week or so. When such notes are studied, Miss Smith may decide that Jimmy isn't always fighting, in fact that he hasn't fought for a week, and that Johnny is a habitual pest, usually dealt with by the rest of the class in a manner less spectacular than Jimmy's well-aimed blow.

THE CONFIDENTIAL CHARACTER OF PERSONAL RECORDS

The gossip possibilities of the "human interest" story are endless. Personal records are nothing if not human interest. Many people love to gossip, and teachers are not exactly exempt from the tendency; in fact teachers' gossip is as often as not motivated by genuine, kindly interest. But still it is not good. The responsibility of secrecy has not been especially laid upon teachers in the past as this obligation is laid upon the medical profession. Today, with our current emphasis upon guidance, the charge to be discreet is emphatic. Teachers who have been entrusted with personal data concerning their pupils should discuss these data only in the course of fulfilling their professional obligations with other school officers, responsible representatives or agencies other than the school, and parents. It is of critical importance for the success of the guidance program that this sense of obligation be developed and strengthened.

OBTAINING FAMILY AND PERSONAL DATA

The initial interview with parents is always important, perhaps especially so in schools not providing opportunity for frequent informal conferences between parents and school officers. A teacher skillful in interviewing may gain much valuable information, both directly and indirectly, during this first contact. It is well to talk over with the parent beforehand the nature of the application blank to be filled in when the child is entered, especially if this blank includes many personal data. A questionnaire to keep data up to date from year to year must be well planned, and so far as possible the teacher should keep herself informed during the course of the year about any important family changes. The pupil himself is one source of such information, but during the years before seven, and sometimes much longer, this information bears checking before any action is taken. A five-year-old girl told her kindergarten teacher,

with every evidence of conviction, that her little sister had died and they were going to have a funeral. Kindergarten had been in session only a few days, and the teacher had not become very well acquainted with her pupils. She made it a point to call at the child's home that afternoon; not only was there no funeral, but there had never been a little sister. It developed, though, that a week before there had been an elaborate funeral across the street. Generally speaking, older children and the parents themselves are preferable as sources of information to the highly imaginative preschool child.

RECORDS IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL

Since the *raison d'être* of the nursery school is child guidance, records have always been an important part of the school program. The very fact that the children are so young, and that the nursery school staff assumes responsibility for physical care and welfare as well as for psychological guidance and the supervision of play activities, necessitates close contact and frequent exchange of information between home and school. The initial record of family and personal data is made very carefully, and in good schools it covers a wide range of information concerning the child's behavior at home, his sleeping habits, eating habits, toilet habits, dressing habits; the vocabulary he uses to inform adults of hunger, discomfort, toilet needs; his usual way of responding to suggestions and directions; what the parents do when he responds to a routine requirement by running away, refusing, or throwing a tantrum; any individual preferences the child shows for people, pets, playthings; any fears of which the parent is aware; any characteristic methods of comforting himself when he is sleepy, worried, or overstimulated, such as thumb-sucking, ear-pulling, or sucking a baby blanket. It is important that the nursery school staff know these intimate details. The daily routine, too, calls for exchanges of information, through charts or contacts with parents. Food intake should be noted; also elimination and

hours of rest. Unusual events such as excessive crying, apparent apprehension, or disinterest in play should sometimes be reported. The present tendency is toward less emphasis on routine data, lest parents become unduly concerned about their children, and toward giving necessary information verbally rather than by written record. But this does not imply that routines can be ignored. Charts are still needed to keep every staff member responsible for the child informed about routine procedures, as well as to inform parents.

Records of children's play activities, as well as their social behavior, usually most informal, are kept by competent nursery school teachers. Whenever there is a lull in demand for adult assistance, no one needing help in the bathroom, no one in acute distress, no assistant or other adult requiring attention and information, it is well for the teacher to sit down and watch after the manner of Mary Ellis, the nursery school teacher described in Baruch's book, with scratch-pad and pencil in hand and eyes and ears alert. Periods of uninterrupted observation necessarily will be brief, for there will be many little, unobtrusive things to do at all times, such as reassuring a timid child or showing him how to assert his rights, or fending off an impending fight by a little skillful diverting of attention. Visitors unaccustomed to the situation easily assume as did the visitors in Baruch's account that there really is nothing to nursery school work; the children just play and the teachers sit and watch them! As a matter of fact, periods of thoughtful observation are indispensable for the proper guidance of a group of young children.

In the office of the nursery school there should be a complete folder for each child. The folder contains his immunization certificates, his medical record upon entrance, frequent subsequent records concerning his physical growth, reports upon any psychological or psychiatric examinations, periodic descriptive records of his behavior in the nursery

school group, a record of significant conferences based largely on the teacher's running notes, between the director and the teacher and one or both parents. Any records in addition to these which may be required by local child welfare authorities are of course filed. Where cooperation has been established and maintained between the nursery school and neighboring kindergarten and primary schools, all this material can be of great assistance to school authorities and teachers; where such cooperation has not been reached, many valuable data are gathered and filed away without fulfilling the purpose for which they were obtained.

Nursery schools have contributed a generous share of data to research, making possible studies of child behavior in groups, as well as contributing significantly to longitudinal or genetic studies.

THE TEACHER'S CONTRIBUTION TO RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping is regarded as an essential part of the nursery school teacher's duty; in good schools she is given time to make observations and to write them up and this work is recognized as a vitally important contribution to the effective running of the school. The records she produces are looked upon as a professional task completed, which has required of her by way of background all her training and experience.

Unfortunately the kindergarten and early grade teachers in many public school situations have come to look upon all records as *clerical* work, of which they already have a generous amount without adding anything extra. This attitude is due in the main to pressure of work, and would probably change soon if, in addition to reduced pupil load, administrative arrangements for released time could be made more generously, and if the records were always given the attention and the credit which by and large they merit. Actually records today recognized as necessary for child guidance make demands upon professional skill and judgment just

as truly as teaching does, and their importance demands that the making of them receive professional recognition.

Laboratory schools accord record keeping the same importance in the grades as in the preschool department; usually, although not always, teachers' schedules are adjusted accordingly. Private schools other than laboratory schools vary greatly as to the degree of emphasis given to records. Regardless of the situation — public, private, laboratory or not laboratory — it is important to remember that recording, important though it is, should never consume time and energy needed for teaching. Where conditions do not permit release of time, recording should be kept at a minimum, with complete records demanded only for children presenting special interests or problems.

REPORTS

The data of records are the basis for the school's reports — reports are required by the demands of the school or school system itself, are necessary as a means of keeping parents in touch with children's progress, and frequently are requested by other social agencies dealing with school-age children. Early childhood education, now conceived as including the period from nursery school entrance through third grade, represents the start of the child's educational career. Just as there is no absolute and sudden break when the nursery child becomes a kindergartner, or the kindergarten pupil enters first grade, so there is no sudden break between the periods of early and later childhood. In a perfectly planned system of education there would be no sharp delineation between late childhood and adolescence, the primary school, the elementary school, the junior high school, the senior high school, and the college. Unfortunately our educational systems are still a long way from realizing the ideal of continuity in method, curriculum, or organization. Intelligent reports represent one way of working toward this continuity. The school for the period of early childhood prop-

erly passes on its reports to the upper elementary grades, not entirely to help smooth administrative problems, but increasingly to assist the upper elementary school in individual guidance of pupils. The administrators and teachers of the preschool and primary grades have a responsibility toward the upper reaches of the educational system of which they are a part.

Parents of young children, on whose shoulders still devolves the major responsibility for the nurture and guidance of their families, normally wish to be informed of school progress and are certainly entitled to such information. Other community agencies, such as hospitals, clinics, recreation centers, churches, and welfare agencies frequently require reports from schools. To this end, the school office should be prepared to issue periodically reports of progress based on its file of records.

Traditionally, school reports have been quantitative rather than qualitative in their data, stating a percentage of success achieved in school subjects and indicating little or nothing about the pupil's personality besides his standing in "conduct" as conventionally defined. The extent of the pupil's success in his schoolwork formerly determined whether or not he would be promoted to the next grade; his parents were kept informed from month to month of what his probable chance for promotion would be, for he brought home a report card which gave him from a low of one to a high of ten in reading, spelling, arithmetic, penmanship, and any other school subject. They were also informed upon his conduct, and frequently sent for to come to the school when conduct was unsatisfactory. Under this system, the report card was a matter of apprehension and dread to the pupil whose work was poor, and too often a matter to boast about when 8 and 9 and even 10 represented his grades, rather than his brother's 2 or 3 or 4. Naturally ambitious for their children's success, the parents used rewards, punishments, invidious comparisons, and every variety of incentive to induce

Junior to raise his grades. It was not uncommon for a "10" in arithmetic to be worth as much as fifty cents or a dollar. Of course grades became ends in themselves, the incentive to cheat when profitable was high, poor report cards were sometimes lost on the way home, and sister Jane, who always had a *good* report card, lorded it over her less successful or industrious siblings. A potent threat to the lazy and disinterested was the prospect of being left back if the grades didn't improve. Conduct marks, awarded on the basis of the teacher's subjective judgment of degree of conformity to school discipline, brought repercussions at home long before the child knew exactly what conduct might be, or why his was exemplary and his brother's no good at all.

A generation of child study brought this method of reporting into growing disrepute, and various modifications have been introduced from time to time toward improving reports, making them more descriptive and more meaningful. In progressive schools in the 1920's a system of reporting the young child's progress in terms of growth in serviceable school and personal habits became quite popular: did he *never, sometimes, often* cover his mouth when he sneezed? say please, thank you, and excuse me? remember to handle his primer correctly? put the tools away when he had finished at the workbench? A very long list of such questions was checked by each teacher for each pupil, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually, or a list of desirable traits such as neatness, punctuality, concentration, was submitted, each bearing the symbol S (satisfactory); U (unsatisfactory); I (improving). Parents of younger children, once the reporting system was explained to them, generally resigned themselves to the change from the traditional numerical or literal method. When the reporting system was not explained, there was indignation on the part of many.

Advances in child psychology and the much publicized principle of individual differences have had the general effect of creating a better attitude toward reporting, making teachers somewhat more sensitive to the psychological effect of

grades upon individuals, and more conscientious about trying to be objective. In many places teachers are urged to report individual progress in the light of the pupil's ability and effort, not in comparison with the achievements of his class or age group. In theory such a procedure is the reasonable one, if the fullest development of personality is taken to be the chief educational aim. In practice, it has certain drawbacks: sooner or later the pupil and his parents will need to be made aware of his standing in his group, so that his educational program may be planned wisely. If he has been rated as "satisfactory" for the first three years of his elementary schooling, and there happens to be any change in the method of reporting for the upper elementary grades, everyone concerned is disappointed. If the individual standard method is used in the early grades it should be supported by either one, or preferably both, of the following procedures: a revision of upper grade as well as lower grade reports so that standards are consistent, and a parent information program which will make the purpose and effect of using individual standards entirely clear. The child himself, too, needs to be wisely educated so that he knows his work is estimated according to *his* effort, not by comparison with the achievements of his next-door neighbor.

Kawin² reports that the most significant trends in reporting at the present time are first, a change from formal to letter-type reports and second, the use of parent-teacher conferences as a substitute for written reports. The New York State Association of Elementary Principals reports "the widest possible" variety in practice within the state, from the formal report card to the replacement of written reports by conferences. Kawin believes that the old-fashioned report card is still "characteristic of a deplorably large proportion of schools today," although she also states, "However, much progress has been made and is being made in both the form and the use of records and reports."

The need for a uniform policy, so that children and

² *Ibid.*

parents do not receive unpleasant shocks when the fourth, or the sixth, or the tenth, or some other school year is reached, seems apparent, and raises the question of how great a difference in the philosophy and method of reporting to parents is permissible as between the preschool and early primary years. Naturally the content of the report differs from year to year — consider the goals of the teacher of twos in contrast with those of the teacher of fives. The satisfactory performance of fundamental routines and the very beginnings of social intercourse concern the teacher in the junior nursery school. At the kindergarten level, various skills and abilities and their reverses have appeared, and the social situation requires a fair measure of compliance both with adult expectations and the rights of playmates. A useful reporting method takes these differences into account. However, variety of reporting should not result in a failure to give parents real reports during the early childhood period. Flexibility should not imply lack of content, and adaptation to the individual child's stage of development should not result in a failure to help parents come to grips with individual problems.

Real progress in reporting, and the gradual development of methods fully adapted to the modern curriculum with its roots in modern child study, are dependent in no small measure upon successful education of teachers in service. Kavin suggests that teachers should always have a share in developing the report forms which they are to use. Certainly it is essential to treat reporting no less than recording as a professional activity, well worthy of teacher attention and school time. In far too many situations it is looked upon just as one more chore. It is also a fact that the most modern methods — conference and letter-form reports — demand far more of the teacher than any numerical, literal, or checking system. Conferences with parents, to be helpful, must be conducted with both skill and integrity; letter-form reports should be positive, informative, and accurate without being

dogmatic, vague, or too discursive. As written reports are permanent documents they should be most carefully scrutinized before they are submitted, particularly when they are presented in informal manner.

SUMMARY

Records and reports are indispensable means of implementing the guidance program of the modern school, and are vital to sound public relations. They should be representative of the school's philosophy; accurate, clear, and serviceable; always regarded as means toward important ends, rather than ends in themselves. Good recording and reporting require a wide background of knowledge and well-perfected skill; they represent specialized professional abilities. While these activities must be afforded generous time if they are to be effective in achieving their ends, they should not be so time-consuming that they interfere with teaching responsibilities; while both records and reports should be sufficiently discursive to be truly descriptive, they should not be so detailed as to confuse important points or so voluminous that because of the pressure of time they remain unread by the people for whom they are intended. If radical changes of content and method must be made, either from year to year throughout the grades or from grade level to grade level, they should be accompanied by careful information to parents and teachers as well. Every effort should be made through intelligent training of teachers in their preparation and use to improve the quality of these instruments continuously, and emphasize their status as professional activities rather than routine chores.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss Kavin's statement about observations, tests, and measurements appearing in the quotation at the head of this chapter. Have you any conception of

whether or not this caution is needed? Relate any incidents of which you know wherein these means have not been held subordinate to educational ends.

2. Read and discuss the sections on record taking in Baruch's book, *Parents and Children Go to School*. How nearly does the view of record keeping expressed in these sections accord with Kavin's position?
3. Visit a nursery school or playground with a fellow student. Arrange a signal to indicate when one or the other is about to observe an instance of social behavior, either a discussion, a quarrel, or dramatic play. Let each observer record the incident, exchanging a signal when it appears to either to be closed. Compare your records to determine how nearly they agree.
4. What are the most important reasons in favor of "100 per cent promotion"?
5. Will 100 per cent promotion lead to relaxed effort on the part of pupils?
6. Are grades, literal or numerical, an incentive to learning in the case of young children? Older children? Adult students? Do they tend to direct attention toward competition rather than toward appreciation or subject matter? Arrange a debate on this matter.
7. What are the qualities of a good descriptive report to the home?
8. Discuss the advantages of the conference over the written report.
9. Of the various sorts of records mentioned in this chapter, which do you think should be kept in strictly confidential files?
10. Make a list of points in professional ethics which are implied in this chapter.

CHAPTER XIV

The School and the Parent

We are today realizing more and more that a child is not a separate entity. . . . The child's family is a part of the child. He is so closely linked with his parents during his earliest years that their satisfactions, anxieties, frustrations are bound to be felt by him and to impinge on his satisfactions, anxieties, and frustrations. He senses tensions, or he absorbs real serenity and peace.

DOROTHY BARUCH¹

The relationship between home and school, between parent and teacher and parent and principal, is far more cordial and mutually helpful today than ever before. A growing realization that guidance is a delicate and difficult task in which all those who know the child intimately must cooperate to assure success brings school officers and fathers and mothers together on a common ground. While his behavior at school may be the exact opposite of his behavior at home, Junior is still the same child, and everybody is beginning to understand that consistency in guiding him is important for his wholesome development. Inconsistency, divergence of standards and principles of discipline are most bewildering; accordingly no one gets very far with Junior

¹ Dorothy Baruch, *Parents and Children Go to School*, p. 29.

until his parents and teacher see eye to eye at least up to a point, for he "plays both ends against the middle" and becomes progressively less and less secure, lacking the reassurance of consistent handling.

However, consistency is not in itself an assurance that the pupil will get the right guidance, for consistency may mean consistently bad rather than consistently good. It is this point at which the need for both parent education and teacher education becomes apparent.

In order to appreciate the present need for adequate parent education programs, it is helpful to study certain attitudes toward the relationship of parents to their children which were widely prevalent formerly and which are by no means entirely out of the picture today. Traditionally in our culture the father had complete rights over his family, and no outside agency could interfere on behalf of the children when these rights were abused. The introduction of compulsory education was regarded by many as a serious threat to parental rights, rights which the parent possessed by ancient inherited tradition, sanctioned by Divine Providence. There are still communities in which the enforcement of compulsory education is difficult because the people have not yet really conceded that the school authorities have a right to require school attendance when the children are needed for farm work or other productive activity. The idea that the parent owns the child remains firmly entrenched. A gradual overriding of the ownership idea has been accomplished in more enlightened communities, although legal decisions still reveal a highly conservative attitude toward "interfering" with the prerogatives of parents and the sanctity of the home. It has long been possible for a social agency or even for indignant neighbors to bring parents into court for physical neglect or abuse of their offspring; of late moral negligence, in the form of leaving children without proper guidance and supervision, has also been brought forward as a reason for community interference in the management of a family.

Meanwhile, intelligent parents who care for their children and still cherish a remnant of the ownership idea are gradually being obliged to modify their attitudes in the face of strong public opinion. The "Children's Charter,"² often violated in practice, has been widely adopted in principle.

Originally the feeling that compulsory education laws were an infringement of parental rights helped to create an attitude bordering on hostility as between parents and school authorities. Here was an agency, the school, backed by the police power of the state, which could take children out of the home, just as the health department, also a source of hostility, could enforce quarantine. Long after the school attendance as well as the quarantine had been generally accepted, the half-understood hostility remained; it is not completely dispelled today, although in a growing number of communities the school principal is a leading citizen both liked and respected, and teachers are cherished family friends.

In the 1920's the mental hygiene movement brought a new sort of threat to the authoritarian home. The home as an institution for child rearing was drastically criticized, and the psychological harm wrought by selfish and neurotic parents was widely publicized. Conscientious parents were shocked to discover when they evaluated their methods by mental hygiene standards, that they themselves sometimes failed to understand the job of child training. They accordingly demanded more information: How might they meet child care problems in a better way? What methods of discipline and care should they use in order to develop well-rounded, well-adjusted personalities? Through the efforts of the Child Study Associations and other organizations, a wealth of information was forthcoming. Lecture-discussion courses were organized; straight discussion groups spon-

² Katherine Clover and Winifred Moses (eds.) *White House Conference on Child Health and Protection*, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., New York, 1930.

sored by parents themselves were set going under the supervision of trained workers; last but by no means least, specialists in various fields (especially psychologists and psychiatrists) yielded to social pressure and began to write books and articles in language intelligible to lay readers. Great changes were inaugurated in home discipline, sometimes laughable changes. The Century of the Child got into full swing; self-expression was the slogan of the times. But there were still many poorly adjusted children; parents did what the books said but it didn't work. What was the trouble? Well, for one thing, the schools. Enlightened parent organizations went to work on the schools, with a show of justice because on the whole teachers lagged behind parents in absorbing the "new point of view in child training." As a matter of fact, a well-conducted study under the Commonwealth Fund³ actually showed that teachers' attitudes toward children left a great deal to be desired. Presented with a carefully prepared questionnaire designed to bring out the attitude of teachers toward the various deadly sins of childhood, the teachers rated as most serious in their implications for the child those forms of misbehavior which threatened teacher authority and school discipline. Impertinence, for instance, abuse of school property, fighting — these were rated as most serious offences. Daydreaming, shyness, and other recessive forms of behavior were rated as far less serious. Significantly enough, parents took a stand quite opposite in responding to the same questionnaire. They had come to appreciate the portent of recessive behavior and the comparative insignificance of rough-and-tumble naughtiness. In fact, the parents evidenced a high degree of agreement with a group of mental hygienists who responded to the same request for behavior ratings. This study seems to indicate that in 1927 intelligent, literate parents had either absorbed the newer points of view pretty thoroughly or were in the instances studied more sensitive to

³ E. K. Wickman, *Teachers' Attitudes and Children's Problems*.

the needs of children than were members of the teaching profession.

This study and other data pointing in the same direction were effective in promoting the demand that teachers study child development, that they round out their theoretical knowledge of how a child learns with a practical appreciation, backed by science, of how a child grows. Groups of parents and teachers began to study children together, and in private schools and the public schools of smaller communities progressively minded parents began to demand a share of influence in shaping the educational policies. Some of our most interesting progressive schools were founded and sponsored by parents who believed in "the new education" and wanted it for their children.⁴ Enlightened P.T.A. groups went to work to modify public school procedures. In the private schools parents sometimes took part in the actual day-by-day routines, volunteering for office work, contributing professional services as pediatricians or nurses, sometimes acting as substitute teachers. For the mutual education of parents and teachers these setups had great possibilities, but sometimes they failed sadly, because a competent school head allowed himself to be hampered by the whims of interested laity hardly competent to act as school administrators. In other cases both school and parent gained a great deal in the way of understanding. Hence, even though there were in the early 1930's and still are today many places where school and home still cherish the ghost of their ancient antagonism, the activities of an American community spurred on by a belief in the mental hygiene program always tends to bring these institutions very much closer together. Success through combined effort as estimated by the adjustment of children and adults alike under the pressures of present-day living leaves much to be desired, and hence currently plans and programs for parent educa-

⁴ For example, The Scarborough School, the Shady Hill School, the Tower Hill School.

tion are being vigorously pressed, while at the same time the adequate training of teachers is receiving more careful attention. The present activity indicates new emphasis in these areas of adult education. It has been much influenced by the nursery school and by certain newer angles of psychiatric theory.

THE NURSERY SCHOOL AND PARENT EDUCATION

"A parentless nursery school is like a man without a heart." Of course, because no outsider can hope to get very far in educating a little child without the understanding cooperation of his parents. Parents have come to look upon the nursery school as a means for their own education as well as for their children's. Baruch found that among the group sending children to the Broadoaks Nursery School in California many wanted help either in solving problems or preventing problems from arising. Others entered their children to relieve certain home situations which these parents could not control and which they considered inimical to their children's welfare; and the idea that nursery school is a cooperative enterprise in which nursery workers and parents share was generally accepted.

From the beginning, parent education has been an important part of the nursery school program, and nursery school directors have been expected to be competent to help parents with their problems. With the exception of some ventures during the Second World War operated frankly on a profit basis, our nursery schools have taken a serious and responsible attitude toward their community obligations. Nursery school parents have usually felt free to talk with the teachers, who have been and are with few exceptions friendly and accessible. As parents of young children are themselves usually young, they are probably more open-minded than some other groups, and perhaps have formed fewer unfortunate habits of shortcut, authoritarian methods. Naturally parents who send their children to nursery school with

purely educational ends in mind are eager for information and counsel. At first it was the policy of many schools to think of their services to parents in terms of direct advice and information; but of late years procedures have begun to reflect the psychiatric trend and the nursery school's teaching staff has taken on the responsibilities of psychiatric social workers as well as teachers. "Helping parents get a greater measure of security is the primary end of parent education," writes Baruch. This represents a great change of emphasis: ten and fifteen years ago, while it was not generally expressed, there was a strong undercurrent of belief that parents needed to be shown the error of their ways and taught new methods of handling their children. Today the nursery school worker is trained to accept parents as people, to discourage perfectionist attitudes both in herself and in her clients, and to help fathers and mothers free themselves from self-condemnation and guilt in connection with the rearing of their children. Both in individual conferences and group discussion self-acceptance on the part of parents is a primary end; in her relationship with them, the nursery school worker tries to make them feel that she is friendly, at once impersonal and genuinely interested in the parents' own problems as well as in their children's. As Baruch indicates, the extent of her therapeutic work is limited by the worker's training; she should know when to suggest a specialist skilled in deeper therapy if such is needed.

Individual and group conferences are the most widely practiced means of maintaining satisfactory cooperation between the home and the nursery school. In addition many schools arrange staff visits to the children's homes when circumstances warrant. Naturally it is very important to defer to the wishes and convenience of the parents in arranging visits; busy professional people or fathers and mothers working in industrial plants must budget their time with care, and cannot devote more than just so much to the nursery school. But when they are welcome and can be

arranged, home visits are excellent, because they make it possible for the parent to talk with the staff member in the parent's own home territory, a situation which makes for a high degree of security. Such visits also help cement the relationship between the child and the nursery school worker; fours especially enjoy exchange of comment and reminiscence about the visits.

Whenever possible, parents are urged to visit the nursery school; some schools insist that time be taken from work if need be for the mother to stay at the school with the child during his first adjustment period. The need for time off for this purpose is becoming rather widely appreciated among employers and personnel managers in concerns employing married women. After the child has adapted himself to the group and feels at home, further visits to the school are encouraged. In order to make observations worth while, the nursery school director may prepare in advance suggestions as to what to look for, both with reference to child behavior and adult techniques of guidance. It is helpful to parents to watch other children as well as their own; by so doing they generally discover that Johnny is really not more aggressive or negative than the next fellow. Sometimes they see that even trained teachers don't enjoy 100 per cent success in securing compliance and accordingly feel better about their own troubles with their small boys and girls.

Nursery schools as cooperative ventures, initiated by two or three eager nursery school education enthusiasts, have been organized now and then since the First World War, when for example a nursery group was started under the direction of Harriet Johnson in connection with what later became the City and Country School of New York. The earliest groups often learned the hard way; they started by letting the mothers, frequently college graduates, take turns running the group. Then they discovered what happens to twos and threes when they are faced with the ideas and peculiarities of a dozen or so grownups instead of a consistent policy, and

as a result a competent teacher was employed. In the days of the First World War there were no such people as nursery school teachers, so the groups turned for guidance to other professional workers who had contacts of whatever sort with children. Miss Johnson, for instance, was a member of the nursing profession. As time went on and the specialist known as the nursery school director emerged, this group naturally took over the responsibilities. Where directors possessed qualities of real leadership, cooperative groups flourished, in many cases, as in that of Miss Johnson's nursery school, becoming the nuclei of progressive schools. As the original group of children progressed beyond nursery age, the group was "promoted" and a new group of babies enrolled, because everyone was so well satisfied that it seemed too bad to transfer to another school situation.

In the years intervening between the First and Second World Wars cooperatively organized nursery school groups followed no particular pattern, and their educational reputation ranged all the way from the "backporch parties" in which one person was paid to provide parking facilities for a group of children to carefully planned schools. The economic depression was not without its effect, and for reasons of economy many groups were poorly housed and most inadequately equipped. When evaluating agencies such as the New York City Day Care Committee were established to meet conditions arising from the Second World War, cooperative nurseries like all others had to meet standards; parents might no longer organize groups according to their own needs and wishes, but were required to accept direction.

Very recently certain cooperative nursery schools have achieved the status of important and interesting experiments. The struggle to meet standard requirements and still keep tuitions within bounds is gradually forcing the proprietary schools, owned and operated as business ventures, to close unless adequate capital can be provided. Only a very small percentage of nursery school patrons can afford the tuition necessary for the school to maintain itself on a cash-and-

carry basis and still show a profit. Cooperative undertakings seem to be the most desirable solution, and under competent leadership are in some instances proving to be both financially sound and educationally excellent. In at least a few such schools the parents themselves do a great deal of down-right work for the school, taking care of the bookkeeping and the files, helping the director establish policies, contributing professional services, in particular taking care of the legal responsibilities of the school. When this relationship between parents and the school personnel is well managed, it would be hard to conceive of a finer sort of rapport, both richer in possibilities for mutual education on the part of the adults concerned and better for the children in the school.

Many nursery schools maintain a parents' library as part of their educational program. The selection of books and periodicals to be included may be a cooperative enterprise between parents and school staff, working together on a library committee. Another service schools generally give is information on current events which affect young children and their parents; above all news about other community services for guidance or entertainment which may be helpful.

So in the good nursery school parents and teachers work together at the job of training children, each group making the maximum contribution of which the members are capable, and each group accepting the other as people — not as "parents" or "teachers." It is certainly true that many young parents, especially parents of first children, gain a great deal through group and individual therapy directed toward relieving these young adults of feelings of guilt and inadequacy in their role of parenthood. But nursery school workers also meet a number of parents who are beautifully adjusted individuals, and who are giving their babies all the peace and serenity possible in their own surroundings. Just as it is necessary to understand certain basic principles of therapy in order to help the troubled father or mother, so it is well to develop sensitivity and appreciation with regard to

the fine things which the personally adequate parent may contribute to his child, to the school, *and* to the worker.

PARENTS AND THE KINDERGARTEN

Kindergartens, both traditional and progressive, practically always have maintained close contact with the children's parents through "mothers' meetings" and home visits. Mothers' parties were the rule in the mission kindergartens conducted in connection with settlements and churches; the mothers' club was and is very frequent in public school situations and private schools. From time to time mothers' clubs have undertaken serious projects as the need arose: to provide a milk fund to be used for children whose parents were in straitened circumstances, to provide funds for eyeglasses and other special requirements, to raise funds for kindergarten equipment. Recently they have been instrumental in arranging for lectures on child study or other topics of general interest. A kindergarten mothers' club when democratically organized may be a great help to the kindergarten teacher, and is also a means of establishing good personal relationships between teacher and parents. In the Broad-oaks School of which Baruch writes, the kindergarten program for parents is no different from the nursery school's; as the new point of view in early childhood education becomes more widely understood, it is to be expected that all kindergarten programs for parents will be conducted on the basis of mutual acceptance, understanding, and cooperation in the education of five-year-olds. This can easily be accomplished without detracting in any way from the sociability and general helpfulness of the type of association usual at present.

PARENT ACTIVITIES IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

The relations between parents and teachers of the primary grades have usually been more formal than those ordinarily maintained in kindergarten and nursery school groups. Con-

ferences frequently are limited to discussions of behavior difficulties or some of the mechanics of the school day. Teachers may be disturbed by arrival or dismissal problems, by the noon hour situation when children bring their lunches to school, by zippers which make it difficult for the pupils to dress quickly, by failure to carry out any home assignments. Parents are anxious about report cards, about the big boy who beats up the little ones on the way home from school, about the failure of the teacher to insist that overshoes are worn home from school in bad weather, about Mary's report that the teacher "hollers" at her. Unfortunately this represents the general tenor in many situations. Of late there are in some schools more interesting questions, however, about the new curriculum; for instance, about the use of readiness tests and the deferment of reading activities beyond the time of first-grade entrance. The increasing volume of popular literature on child care and education is motivating a far greater number of questions about discipline and management. Increasing curiosity and interest on the part of parents is adding to the burden of many primary school teachers; this interest should finally make for a far better understanding among the people concerned, but it may also make for new antagonisms if teachers are unable to meet the challenge in friendly fashion, leaving debated questions open for discussion and supplying sound information. Tensions are often created because all this is new to the average primary school teacher herself. When she is of the old school and only less than half convinced that the activity curriculum isn't just fooling and that the deferment of reading to wait upon maturation isn't nonsense, it is hard for her to meet the parents in a frank, positive fashion. Young teachers, thoroughly convinced of the values of progressive education, can be very dogmatic and impatient with unbelieving parents. So it is sadly true that increased interest (and frequently an intelligently critical attitude) on the part of parents may have a negative result, creating new difficul-

ties. On the other hand, a splendid opportunity for far more effective home and school cooperation is presenting itself; schools should and can meet the challenge, through offering a sound educational program designed to acquaint parents with the newer theories in curriculum making, preferably *in advance* of radical changes in practice. Teachers in service, too, may profit by an educational program planned to assist them in their contacts with parents. There is no valid reason why the parent of the child in the third grade should not be interviewed just as sympathetically and intelligently as is the parent whose child attends a good nursery school, or why he should not be given full explanation of why the schools are not run the way they were when *he* went to school.

NEWER TRENDS IN THE PLANNING OF PARENTS' MEETINGS

The Workshop

The workshop as part of the experience curriculum for teachers in training has thoroughly commended itself to college faculties and to students themselves. The usefulness of this activity is now being extended to parents as well. Actually playing with finger paints, clay, and blocks, as well as easel painting, weaving, and stenciling are thoroughly enjoyed by tired adults at the end of the day, and those who have participated in workshops can testify to the delight of those who in their thirties discover for the first time that they can "do something"; Mr. Jones can paint a picture, and it is good! Mrs. Smith never knew what fun it was to weave. Meanwhile, members of the teaching staff are circulating about or busy at tasks of their own. There is no stiffness about such a gathering; the problem of getting acquainted is solved automatically.

Social Events

Parties are fun, provided those who come to them really want to be there, and are not making sacrifices all out of

proportion to the enjoyment offered by the event. Parties should be planned to meet the time schedules of the group; dates and hours should be set only after studying possibilities and preferences. Entertainment, too, should be planned with reference to the particular group; unless the committee responsible for the event is convinced that a new idea is really good, it is better to arrange something which the crowd is accustomed to and likes. Time and entertainment should be reasonably acceptable to teachers as well as parents, for the school day is a long and tiring one.

Discussions

Group discussions, conducted by a competent leader who prepares for each meeting by announcing a stimulating topic and then starts off the discussion with a good question, are greatly enjoyed. But it must not be assumed that all the leader does is to start things off with a bang; he or she also guides discussion carefully, summarizing and clinching points occasionally, always alert to the needs of individuals.

Lectures

Many parents' groups are interested in lectures, even series of lectures, as part of the school's educational progress. Lectures given by authorities well chosen from the point of view of a group's special needs and interests may be very helpful. The lecturer is presumably an outsider. His views are presented objectively and impersonally, and if well and clearly presented may help parents and teachers to see their local problem in a new light. The lecturer is, or should be, an authority. The field of child development is so broad that few people are able to keep up with all the recent findings. It is interesting and stimulating to hear about such up-to-the-minute data at first hand. When differences of opinion, perhaps between two faculty groups or between parents and teachers or among the school's patrons, as a whole stimulate discussion amounting to dissension, a fresh, outside presenta-

tion of the issues involved often clears the air. But since lectures create financial obligations, and these obligations are the concern of the entire group, and since lecturers have been known to be dogmatic and sometimes tactless because of their lack of acquaintance with local problems, certain considerations should be kept in mind when planning either individual talks or series.

1. The decision to invite a lecturer should be arrived at through democratic discussion, in which the wishes of the majority prevail but in which the objections of the minority are taken into account. No one should be invited without the support of a generous majority, and on the other hand no one should address the group whose personality or recognized position offends a minority. To be effective, a parents' organization must be a closely knit group in which individual differences of opinion are respected in an honest, friendly fashion.

2. The lecture, or the series of lectures, should properly be arranged for in response to a felt need for more information on a specific topic or several specific questions. As a "publicity stunt" either the single event or the series may occasionally be justified; but if so motivated little is accomplished for the group *except* the publicity. This fact needs to be squarely faced by the individual or committee making the arrangement.

3. The lecturer should be given a reasonable amount of information beforehand as to the interests of the group, the degree to which the members can or will undertake to carry on outside reading on the lecturer's topic, and any prejudices which may seriously affect the lecturer's success. On the other hand, the lecturer should not be handicapped by the prejudices of a small group, and should not be engaged to conduct propaganda for parent education or for anything else, without his full knowledge and consent.

4. The group should prepare itself to enjoy the outside speaker by reading up on his topic in advance and by arriv-

ing at the lecture with plenty of lively questions. This requires careful advance publicity, as well as intelligent co-operation on the part of the speaker.

INTERCHANGE OF VISITS BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

The values of an interchange of visits have already been mentioned. Regardless of the age levels under consideration, these visits are very worth while. When visiting the school, parents should be provided with specific suggestions as to what to look for, so that their time and effort may be well spent.

School Parties and Entertainments

School events to which parents are invited, running all the way from a simple nursery school Christmas party to a much rehearsed play, are thoroughly enjoyed by many parents, even by those who do not take too active an interest in school problems. Properly managed, such events may be educationally valuable for pupils as well; but the importance of wise and careful planning can hardly be overestimated, and those responsible for such events need to remember first, last, and all the time that the school exists for the pupils, and that it is their education which is the main consideration of all the school's activities. A party should be the pupil's own. A play or pageant or tea, sale or holiday festival should be theirs as well. This means that all events should be actively planned by the pupils with the leadership of the teachers, or a committee of parents and teachers, as the case may be. It should also be carried through by the pupils concerned, with a minimum of adult guidance and suggestion. If anyone is overworked or worn out by making costumes or scenery — in this case it had better be the children and not the adults who feel exhaustion. Events in the course of which tired and overworked adults overstimulate the pupils without giving them any real sense of responsibility for the course of things are educationally valueless or worse; so are

events which exploit the cuteness of the four-year-olds. Four-year-olds belong in their own classroom, and should be exposed to none but select audiences. Selection is made on the basis of interest in the children's everyday activities and readiness to enjoy a visit by invitation in which *nothing* but ordinary seasonal activities, and perhaps a little ice cream, is going on. Fives and sixes and sevens and eights need the same consideration, with sensible modifications for age level.

The Leadership of Parents' Groups

Here, as elsewhere, leadership is of crucial importance. Unless such leadership is honestly democratic, the benefits of any sort of parents' or parent-teachers' group will be enjoyed only by the select few who approve the reigning policy. It is very easy for a small number to dominate the whole association, and often with the best of intentions to ruin its educational possibilities for the majority. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link; a parents' association is really not much stronger than its least interested members. If most of the members think purely social events are the only interesting possibility, it is the members' association and the members choice registered in democratic fashion that should prevail. The intelligentsia can always organize its own study group and agree to attend lectures elsewhere without trying to force psychology on the unwilling. A dominating minority, going in for activities which leave out the majority, soon wrecks the constructive possibilities of a parent-teachers' organization.

The right relationship between the parents' association and the school administration presents a very delicate question, the answer to which is worked out in various ways. There are such associations, initiated and supported by parents or parents and teachers, in which the head of the school assumes the direction, either jointly with a committee of the

association's members, or frankly as an individual with administrative experience who has the best good of all in mind. How well this works depends on the administrator and his ability to work in a truly democratic spirit. There are other associations in which a gifted member runs things, with the cooperation of the principal. How this functions again depends on the personalities involved. There are still other associations where the members and the school office are at loggerheads, either openly or implicitly. Sometimes this cannot be helped, because there are real wrongs to be righted; but such a relationship is bound to be destructive, and cannot last indefinitely. The most successful groups are those which are not dominated by individuals or minorities, but in which the temporary, democratically selected leaders know how to use the leadership of the principal or the particular gifts of gifted members for the good of the association. This situation does not occur unless the school administrator is a secure individual, with faith in his own policies and therefore no urge to dominate; neither can it occur if the school head is afraid to speak his own mind, or forgets that he is finally responsible for the conduct of his school.

SUMMARY

More parents are taking an active interest in the school and its policies today than ever before. Their very interest reflects a new sense of responsibility jointly shared, and in many places a complete disappearance of the traditional hostilities and antagonisms toward school authorities once widely prevalent. The interest expressed by parents also places new responsibilities upon the school's staff. Administrators and teachers are having to prepare themselves for a new sort of leadership in educational endeavor. A school backed by a believing and intelligent parent clientele is practically invincible. The enduring or ephemeral nature of such backing depends upon the presence or absence of demo-

cratic leadership and the competence of school officers to carry their share of responsibility, at least with credit, and preferably with distinction.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Mention the chief causes of friction between parents and school authorities.
2. What are some of the changes now going on in school procedure concerning which parents need to be informed?
3. Of the methods now used to inform parents, which do you think are the most satisfactory?
4. How should the individual teacher regard the justifiable complaints of parents about school procedures for which she, the teacher, is not responsible? What should she do about them?
5. What may teachers learn from parents?
6. Read and evaluate the sections in *Parents and Children Go to School* having to do with individual and group discussions between parents and teachers. What advantages do you see in the group method?
7. Develop a list of suggestions for teachers in dealing with parents.
8. Suggest a number of good topics for discussion with a group of parents whose children are in second and third grade.
9. Discuss the advantages of active parent cooperation in school affairs.
10. List the areas in which school authorities must have the final word in determining policies.

CHAPTER XV

The Teacher in Early Childhood Education

Having so favorable an organization, all we need is to impregnate it with geniuses, to get superior men and women working more and more abundantly in it and for it and at it, and in a generation or two America may well lead the education of the world.

WILLIAM JAMES ¹

Of all the tasks which need to be accomplished in the field of education, the selection and preparation of teachers is the most urgent and the most important, for all the knowledge of child development, all the scientific curriculum construction, all the buildings and equipment, indeed all the new interest on the part of parents and the general public are of no avail apart from a teaching profession which enlists the intelligence, the leadership, the professional enthusiasm of superior men and women. A half century ago William James asked for geniuses to impregnate our educational systems; the more realistic administrator of today is ready to settle for a little less than genius but he is still thoroughly

¹ *Talks to Teachers*, pp. 4f.

alert to the need for well-trained, well-poised, and professionally enthusiastic candidates.

Early childhood education was once thought to be a suitable field for the girl of good family, limited intelligence, and motherly instincts. Today it is recognized as a profession offering to the gifted abundant opportunity for original work, and more and more generally providing recognition and remuneration on a par with those enjoyed by secondary school teachers. A generation ago the ability to sing and play and draw cleverly were considered prime requisites; today, although these skills are valued as contributing a great deal to the teaching of little children, they are held subordinate to general intelligence, academic training, and psychological insight. The victrola and the radio go far to compensate for lack of ability in musical performance; taste and appreciation are needed for the intelligent use of them, but these attributes depend upon general education and culture rather than upon specific talent. A high degree of skill in graphic and plastic expressional activities is not required of the prospective teacher. A feeling for the general qualities of expressional media, a confidence gained through working and playing with them herself, a discernment which recognizes honest effort, and an appreciation which discerns the creative spark are much to be preferred to the mere ability to do clever things. On the other hand the candidate for nursery or kindergarten or primary school teaching today must have the intelligence and academic training to grasp the significance of the many phases of child study; she must also have the objectivity and the insight to study children on her own account, and to record her results. Most of all she must have the resourcefulness and the skill requisite to guide a group of thirty-five or forty little children, each one a distinct personality with unique qualities which distinguish him from all the others. The requirements in this field, physical, intellectual, and above all social and emotional, are coming to be very high indeed.

THE PERSONAL QUALITIES OF THE TEACHER

Physical Traits

The teacher of young children needs plenty of physical endurance. Nursery school work can be really gruelling at times; no matter how well-planned or well-equipped the physical setup of the school, there will be backbreaking days. The housing and equipment are actually far from ideal in many schools, so various forms of furniture moving are frequently required. Children are warm and comfortable out of doors, playing actively, on many days when the cold puts a real strain upon the teacher who, by reason of preference and convention, does not romp. Regular attendance at work is essential; unless a candidate is fairly sure of appearing fit and well a very high percentage of the days school is in session, teaching is not for her.

Physical handicaps of various sorts disqualify candidates: sensory defects, orthopedic handicaps, skin eruptions, must be corrected before the candidate can be considered for work in this field. Height and weight are checked in many school systems. Chest X rays are required periodically. In addition to a clean bill of health from the medical profession, a candidate should know that she can count on feeling well most of the time; headaches and other minor discomforts, even though they are borne with fortitude, do not combine well with a roomful of lively little children.

The appearance of the teacher is not unimportant. She should be suitably dressed, given to well-selected bright colors, because little children love color and appreciate a teacher who treats them to a variety of it. They notice what the teacher wears and often comment upon her appearance with startling frankness. Bright smocks are very useful for constant wear in the nursery school, for work periods in kindergarten and primary grades. Long bobbed hair should be restrained from falling over the shoulders, fingernails must be worn short, for safety as well as aesthetic considera-

tions. Children love a "pretty" teacher and their standards are simple enough for nearly anyone to meet.

Scholastic Aptitude

The requirement of the bachelor's degree for certification, now quite general, automatically sets the lower limit of scholastic achievement for candidates in the profession. Advancement either to administrative offices or to special services, such as play therapy or mental testing, can only be achieved after graduate study. Therefore, even though they may possess excellent general personality qualifications, individuals who lack the interest or ability to do good academic work are now screened from the field of early childhood education.

Social and Emotional Maturity

As will have appeared from preceding discussions, teachers of the nursery, kindergarten, and primary years today are expected to be skillful in conducting interviews and to cooperate intelligently in therapy when necessary. These responsibilities require maturity as well as the command of techniques. The candidate for teaching should have achieved insight into her own problems, and be on the road to solving them without making unfair demands on other persons. She should know how to accept herself, and plan her way of living so that it includes adequate personal satisfactions quite outside of her profession. The teaching profession offers many satisfactions, but to be legitimate as ends these must all be subordinate to the satisfaction of a job well done in terms of the results achieved with parents and pupils. The affection of little children is one return legitimately to be enjoyed, provided it does not create unwholesome dependence. According to the older idea of a successful teacher, the children should be very fond of her, perhaps also a little afraid of her. Today a warm, friendly relationship is regarded as most important, but a good teacher-pupil

relationship should develop increasing independence in the children as time goes on. If a teacher tends to call forth an affection so intense that her pupils are not able to accept any other teacher without strain and difficulty, her own emotional adjustment is perhaps not a very satisfactory one. She may be seeking and getting from her pupils a gratification which she is failing to find in other human relationships. It is easy to see how and why very good teachers sometimes find themselves in difficulty of this sort. Their work is an absorbing one, their energy, time, and funds for out-of-school diversions are frequently limited. Sometimes, too, they have been unable during their training to have as much personal enjoyment as young people need. Accordingly they look to their profession for their main satisfactions. This is not a wholesome way of planning the professional life. Other interests, social, intellectual, and emotional, must be sought if the teacher is to develop a mature, well-rounded personality in the course of her life work.

The teacher of little children needs to be realistic about unavoidable irritations. It was the old-fashioned idea that it takes endless patience to work with babies. Probably it does, but it is necessary to discriminate between a make-believe patience which people sometimes laboriously "keep," and the patience born of so real an interest in growth that it hardly amounts to patience at all. The latter quality distinguishes the really excellent teacher of young children. Forced patience may account for not a few nervous breakdowns among teachers and for many unhappy children. A child never fails to feel when you "keep your patience." If one has to keep it, it is actually better to lose it. Most children react wholesomely to an occasional loss of temper on the part of a usually pleasant and helpful adult. There is a good deal of discussion nowadays about how far adults should try to keep any expressions of annoyance or concern out of their dealings with the young. Some think it much better to express the annoyance and be done with it, others

think that a neutral, quiet, emotional atmosphere is so necessary for small children that adults who cannot maintain complete calm at all times had better not try to work with the very young. A sensible middle ground seems to be this: any normal person has some temper, and occasionally shows it. Small children can be exceedingly irritating, especially if they choose to be annoying at the time when, because of some other reason, the adult self-control is particularly short. A headache, an argument at the breakfast table, a sleepless night, does something to a teacher's nerves as well as the children's. When truly irritating situations arise, it is usually better to give vent to the annoyance; but if irritating things happen very often then the teacher herself probably needs attention. Maybe she is in the wrong job. Maybe she is overworked. Maybe her irritation with the children is just a reflection of her own dissatisfaction with life. In any case she should look into the matter intelligently, for children should not be subjected to frequent outbursts of nerves, just as teachers should not be expected to repress natural irritations at all times.

Teaching should be just one aspect, the professional, of a well-rounded life. Indifference, the "I put on my hat and walk out with the children" attitude, is deplorable and incompatible with proper professional standards. On the other hand, staying at school all hours of the day, getting so identified with one's pupils that one feels intensely their every joy and sorrow, or, worse yet, blaming one's self for every pupil's failings, are equally disastrous. The successful teacher accepts at the outset her limitations in remaking the personalities of her pupils. They are in school for only a part of their waking time, only five days a week, at the most for ten months of the year. The rest of the time they are with their families and subjected to all sorts of community influence, good, bad, and indifferent. The intelligent teacher will have studied this community, and will know a great deal about the homes from which the children come. She will

understand and accept the people in the community as they are, do what she can to help work out problems, but develop no guilt feelings because she cannot remake the social structure.

THE IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

The training of teachers in service has received a great deal of attention in many localities for the last twenty-five years. In many cases it has been a great boon to teachers of younger children. When the whole professional job amounted to dropping down to the level of the five-year-old or six-year-old for several hours of the day and teaching him the rudiments of learning, teaching was a dismal calling; but once the members of the teaching profession were encouraged to study psychology and education, and urged to undertake research in curriculum reconstruction, the outlook began to change. The classrooms of the country, while many of them still leave much to be desired, have been greatly improved by newer techniques of teaching acquired through extramural courses, summer school, and well-planned teachers' institutes. Nothing enhances a worker's enjoyment of his lifework more than the determination to find out all that can be known about it. However, professional study, like testing programs, record keeping, and various other modern additions to school work should remain a means to an end — the better teaching of children. It may also be added, the better teaching of children because the teacher herself has acquired a broader vision. When courses are gone in for to such an extent that teachers turn up in their classrooms at 8:30 A.M. too tired to do good teaching, or when they must dash away on the minute of three so that they can arrive at a lecture at 3:30, probably too breathless to get anything out of it, this further education seems to have become an end in itself. Real good for the schools, and real professional growth in the teachers, are not achieved through the mere accumulation of course credits. The main

aim of study while in service should be to develop power and skill in creative teaching.

Modern theories and methods in the practice of supervision stress the improvement of teaching as the purpose of supervision and the main aim of the supervisor. Where good professional relations exist between supervisor and teachers supervisory visits and conferences are very valuable educationally. This is especially true in situations where supervisors are genuinely democratic in the conduct of their work; the conference may well be an educational experience for the supervisor as well as for the teacher.

Professional organizations have been important in the development of educational theory in this country through their excellent annual programs, their publications, and the publicity they have afforded educational topics. In the gradual growth of understanding between kindergarten and grade teachers, organized associations of kindergartners have played no small part. The strong professional interest and pride characteristic of the first kindergarten group in America led to the early development of a professional organization. In 1884 the Froebel Institute met at Madison, Wisconsin, in connection with the annual gathering of the National Education Association. As a result of this meeting there was formed the Department of Kindergarten Education of the N.E.A. At the meetings of this association Miss Hill and Miss Anna Bryan read their first telling papers in criticism of the traditional Froebelian methods. In 1892 was organized the International Kindergarten Union, which, as its title implies, included within its membership kindergarten workers the world over. The work of this organization in furthering the development of early education in this country has been characterized throughout by clarity of vision, integrity of purpose, and breadth of outlook. Through its meetings and publications both conservatives and progressives found a hearing in the days when the radicals were contending for their own. Again, through its meetings the

contact of the kindergarten group with specialists in other fields, such as child psychology, physical hygiene, and primary education was continually encouraged and strengthened. In 1925 the I.K.U. first published its own periodical, *Childhood Education*. From the first this periodical has presented a wide range of well-selected material designed to bring the worker with kindergarten children into real sympathy with the nursery and primary teacher; above all, the magazine has been directed toward giving the teacher of young children sound scientific information about psychology, nutrition, and other aspects of child welfare. For the first five issues the magazine was exclusively the publication of the I.K.U. The sixth volume was published with the cooperation of the National Council of Primary Education and the National Association for Nursery Education. In 1929 the I.K.U. convention undertook a serious reorganization of its purposes and activities, and emerged from this reorganization with a new name and an admittedly wider purpose. It became the Association for Childhood Education, the A.C.E.; and the magazine, *Childhood Education*, became the publication of this reorganized I.K.U. Volumes VII and VIII of *Childhood Education* accordingly were published by the A.C.E. in cooperation with the National Council of Primary Education and the National Association of Nursery Education. Then the Primary Council decided to merge its identity with the A.C.E., with the result that in 1933 there appeared the periodical *Childhood Education*, published by the A.C.E. Thus the I.K.U. resigned its name and, as it were, its privacy, to become the foundation of a new and broader organization, designed to include within its activities all efforts to educate and care for children of preschool and early school years. In so doing, it would seem to have fulfilled the vision of its early leaders, who hoped that it would be a worthy exponent of the best and finest in early education as they then saw it.

Membership in professional organizations is an effective

way of keeping in touch with current thinking. Teachers may be very helpful to each other; it is unfortunate that a spirit of competition should sometimes intervene to prevent full professional cooperation, and that a lack of security often prevents individual members of the profession from giving their best to their colleagues. National and regional meetings represent one way of securing freer and better interchange of ideas.

The field of early childhood education offers many possibilities for advancement for those who are willing to undertake graduate study. Play therapy, for example, is a special technique for which general experience with groups of little children provides excellent background. Mental testing and the giving and scoring of educational tests represent other possibilities for specialization. Child guidance at the pre-school and early school levels offers plenty of opportunity to teachers interested in the application of psychology and psychiatry to little children's problems. For the person who enjoys work with adults as well as children, parent guidance either in combination with the supervision of teaching or as a distinct specialization is a possibility; more obviously, perhaps, supervisors of instruction are frequently selected from the teaching personnel. Intelligent, successful teachers do well to consider these possibilities for professional growth; the teacher of little children has a problem very different from that of the upper elementary, junior high, and high school teacher. The higher grades require emphasis on subject matter, and subject matter specialization may well provide interesting areas for intellectual growth. It is a challenge, for instance, to anyone's scholarship to lead a bright fifth or sixth grade in an integrated curriculum, if the pupils are permitted freedom of choice. On the other hand, the teacher of the primary grade soon exhausts her subject matter, while the study of her pupils is a never-ending challenge. Therefore her ways of advancing professionally, unless she is interested in supervision and administration,

lie in the direction of psychology and psychiatric social work in their special applications to young children. This is not intended to imply that the kindergarten-primary teacher will find no inspiration from the pursuit of the liberal disciplines—the study of languages and literature, of social sciences and philosophy. On the contrary, such study is highly rewarding provided the student has the requisite preparation to pursue advanced courses. For many people who teach little children the fine arts also offer a challenging field for study and self-development.

THE ENTRANCE OF MEN INTO THE FIELD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The predominance of feminine influence during the child's early years has long been a matter of concern to psychiatrists. The nursery and kindergarten child is relieved of his parents' solicitude while at school, but he goes to a mother substitute with no suggestion of a male parent surrogate before sixth or seventh grade. As American fathers have little time to spend with their growing children because of the exacting demands made upon them by business and professional obligations, the dominance of the early childhood years by female teachers is regrettable, although very natural in view of our cultural pattern. Of late there are indications that the cultural pattern is changing; the participation of fathers in household and child-care activities is becoming more general. In addition, the growing tendency toward a single salary scale for all teachers from the preschool through the high school will remove the financial obstacle heretofore brought forward against the employment of male teachers for the lower grades. Men can, if they will, accept such appointments; school administrators are in a position to offer them. What will happen in this connection as a result of pressure from psychiatric sources remains to be seen.

SUMMARY

Success and advancement in the field of early childhood education today require adequate preliminary training and well-planned graduate study. Professional study carried on while in service as a teacher should lead to a better understanding of general educational problems and probably to increased proficiency in some one phase of work with little children: child guidance, educational testing, the techniques of remedial teaching, or methods of curriculum construction. For especially interested or gifted teachers the study of the arts may offer the richest possibilities for personal and professional growth. Some part of the time given to study for professional advancement should go in every case toward an enrichment of the content of one's own knowledge: of history, literature, languages, or mathematics, as individual tastes may dictate. Also, the teacher of young children should cultivate hobbies and other activities with no direct relation to her profession, and within the limits of her time and strength she should have an interesting and varied social existence, taking an active part in community life.

This is very far from the old idea of the drab and devoted "little-read schoolma'am"—as far as the warm, cheerful, modern school building is from the little red schoolhouse. But this new teacher of little children is indispensable for true progress in early childhood education: it is on her intelligence, her leadership, and her professional enthusiasm that the success of educational endeavor ultimately depends.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Inform yourself thoroughly about the possibilities for professional satisfaction and salary increases in the field of early childhood education in your community.
2. Explain to a high school senior who is considering this field the advantages and disadvantages from a profes-

sional and an economic standpoint, as you yourself see these.

3. Describe what is required of a candidate in this field: intellectually, emotionally, and physically.
4. List the interesting possibilities for professional advancement from classroom teaching to other educational activities.
5. Why is the individual teacher so important to the success of modern progressive education?

APPENDIX

Studying Early Childhood Education at First Hand

No matter how well it may be planned and presented, no lecture, discussion, debate, or reading assignment ever takes the place of direct observation. Students of early childhood education who really desire the best from their study and training will make opportunities to observe children, to visit different institutions serving small children, to examine educational equipment and play equipment, not only as they are required to do so by their college instructors but also on their own time and actuated by their own interest. If such observation is not so keenly interesting that it is pleasurable and to a certain extent actually relaxing, then it is quite possible that the student who is bored or takes it on as a chore has made the wrong choice in deciding upon her field.

In the following pages 12 projects are suggested, any or all of which will be found fruitful for students who have a real desire to study early childhood education and a genuine interest in small children.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR OBSERVERS

Whether the student is visiting a day nursery, a playground, a toy store or a public school, she is a guest of the

institution. She will be a welcome guest to the degree that she observes all the courtesies she would expect from a visitor to her own home or place of employment. On her part, she expects to learn through observation and through information given by her host or hostess. In order to realize these expectations, she must observe without disturbing and question without giving offense.

Observation

When children and their teachers are under observation, the intelligent observer considers first and foremost the welfare of the children. In so doing she is indirectly showing the teacher the most valuable and appreciated courtesy. It should be noted that whenever children are observed in a teacher-directed situation, while it is a nice gesture to assure the teacher that only her pupils are the concern of the visitor, this is never wholly true. The teacher is a part of the situation in which the children are being observed, and she is a very important part. A courteous observer is careful never to attract attention to herself, but rather to make of herself as much a part of the scenery as possible. When notes are taken, they should be taken unobtrusively. Children easily accustom themselves to the presence of observers unless they are made self-conscious by poor observation technique. If one child or several children seem to be watching the observer, it is well to stop taking notes for the moment, smile in friendly fashion and immediately interest oneself in something going on in another corner of the room. When asked, as one is occasionally, "What are you writing?" it is sometimes possible to say "Notes" in a reassuring voice, and pass the ordeal. At other times a true reply such as "What everybody is doing in this room. I've seen some other first grades, now I'd like to see and remember what this one is like." Sometimes the inquisitor goes on: "Are you writing about me?" "Not especially," in a sufficiently appreciative tone, implying that this might well be interesting, will generally pass, but should not be used unless true.

Under no circumstances may the observer laugh, exclaim, or murmur to a fellow observer about what the children are doing, cute or otherwise.

Whenever this can be arranged through the school office, it is desirable to have the teacher know in advance who her visitor is and what the visitor is especially interested in observing. Generally it is best to enter a class with no more than a friendly nod of greeting and to leave in the same fashion. Any conference should be arranged at the room teacher's convenience; in the main such conferences are welcomed and the observer can learn a great deal from the experience. Among the suggestions made in the following pages, a number will require the observer to regard the classroom and the teacher from the point of view of a constructive critic. This is by no means intended to imply that criticisms should be offered the teacher in an interview following an observation. A good general rule is to offer no suggestion, no matter how friendly or constructive, unless the observer has been urgently asked in advance to look for certain points which interest the room teacher herself. Successful observers learn to listen rather than to talk a great deal; on the other hand every observer who is in any sense a real person herself can see many good things, big and little, upon which to comment in practically any situation. Teaching is not easy, as would-be teachers should learn at the earliest possible moment. No one has a perfect batting average in dealing with thirty or more young children six or seven hours a day five days a week; but every conscientious teacher achieves a fair average, and no one is above feeling pleasure when a good technique is recognized.

Seeking Information

When planning a visit, the observer should get as much advance information as possible about the purposes of the project visited, the philosophy of the individuals directing it, the way in which it is supported, the general character of the clientele served. If observations are arranged for as

part of a college course, pertinent information may be supplied in advance by the instructor. If the observer is making a voluntary trip on her own, she should do so only after being properly introduced through some friend or connection, getting what information she can from the same source. While visiting the project it is best to show one's genuine interest in learning, to be a good listener, and to leave it to the host or hostess to decide what information shall be given. Clumsy leading questions such as are occasionally asked by eager students are likely to annoy, and unlikely to elicit anything worth while. On the other hand, if asked what the observer would like to know, a frank and friendly, "Anything you have time to tell me" encourages the marshaling of interesting facts.

Visits made by students to educational projects for little children constitute professional activities, and students should consider themselves bound by the ethics of the profession they expect to enter. Therefore criticisms of what is seen and heard should be voiced only in professional gatherings, usually only in seminar or college class. Even favorable criticisms bandied about loosely may be harmful, because misunderstood, and the resulting unpleasantness easily redounds to the detriment of the project criticized as well as to that of the student body of which the observer is a member.

PROJECT 1

Visit a neighboring day-care center or children's home. Be sure you are satisfactorily introduced, welcome, and visiting at a time altogether convenient to the director. Plan your visit so that the director will be free to devote a little time to talking with you.

Learn in advance by whom the institution is sponsored, how it is financed, whom it serves.

Study the day's program, so that you may determine how much time is given to vigorous play, how much to quiet

activities, how much to eating, sleeping, and general health routines.

Note the attitude of the children.

1. Do they approach the adults in charge spontaneously? Is there evidence of warmth and affection between children and adults?

2. Are they self-directed and secure, according to what you know should be expected of children their age?

3. Are there plenty of interesting things to do? Do the children explore the environment freely, or do they stand at loose ends, waiting for suggestions?

Note the play possibilities. List apparatus and play equipment. Describe or sketch any items you think especially good.

Note the general character of the physical surroundings.

1. Is the setting attractive? Adequately spacious?

2. Is out-of-door play space sufficient?

From this visit, would you voluntarily place a child in whom you were particularly interested in this environment?

PROJECT 2

Visit a neighborhood playground, either in a park or in connection with a housing project.

Observe the undirected play of the children.

Note the play equipment provided, and the children's use of it.

On the basis of this visit, give your evaluation of each of the following equipment items as a means of contributing to the enjoyment of the children using it.

Swing

Sandbox

Seesaw

Climbing gym

Walking board

Balls

Rings

Wagons

Slide

Note both points of excellence and possible hazards to safety.

Is any of the equipment interesting or original? If so, describe it in detail or by sketches.

PROJECT 3

Visit a building designed for the use of young children.
Study this building with the following points in mind:

Location

Attractiveness of site; safety of approaches; proximity to children's homes; exposure with respect to sun and weather.

Structure

Building material?

Is the building ornate, or functional in its general character?

Does it give the impression of permanence, and of representing a large investment?

Interior

Are playrooms, lavatories, dining facilities, kitchen, office and staff rooms well placed from the functional point of view?

Is window space adequate?

Heating satisfactory?

Lighting adequate and pleasant?

Is there adequate storage space?

Is there good provision for plants and for pets?

Are the floors attractive, warm, easily cleaned?

What do you notice about any stairs or steps to be used by the children?

Out-of-door Play Space

Extent?

Arrangement?

Surface?

Protection?

Is there any terrace or other provision for play outdoors in muddy or slightly inclement weather?

PROJECT 4

If possible, revisit the school described in Project 3. Study the equipment carefully, making sketches as it seems desirable.

Outdoor Play Equipment

Standard apparatus, that is, slide, climbing gym, and so forth.

Improvised equipment: packing boxes, boards, tire tube, length sewer pipe safely cemented down, wire spools.

Wheel toys, such as tricycles, wagons, wheelbarrows, baby buggy.

Material for expressional activities: tables, easels, to accommodate this.

Sandbox.

Playhouse.

Dolls and toys for house play.

Blocks.

Indoor Equipment

Books and pictures. Note their arrangement.

Tables, easels, work bench, bench tools. Note arrangement.

Doll corner.

Clay corner.

Musical instruments.

Resting facilities

Cots and blankets: character, how stored.

Dining facilities

How are the children seated? How is the meal served?

Are the dishes attractive? Is a steam table used?

Toileting facilities

How many washbowls? Toilet bowls? Are the fixtures standard size or child size? What is the floor covering? Towels fabric or paper? Liquid soap or cakes?

Schoolroom Equipment

Equipment for early grades movable or stationary?

What are the laboratory facilities? Workbenches?

Are play materials visible in grade classrooms?

What is the arrangement of books and materials in the first grade? The second grade? The third grade?

Are any visual aids in evidence?

Select one room for special study. Is the space used to the best advantage? Can you suggest a rearrangement of standard schoolroom equipment, play equipment, material for expressional activities or storage space? Sketch the present arrangement and show how you would change this if it were your room.

PROJECT 5

1. Visit a commercial toy store.

a. Notice the arrangement of the toys; their aesthetic qualities; their price; their durability; their probable appeal for children. Which, if any, do you think would appeal to an adult idea of "cuteness" rather than to a child's interest?

b. Select at least one toy or item of equipment which you would like to include in providing a play environment for each of the following groups:

Junior Nursery School

A Five-year-old Kindergarten Group

First Grade

Second Grade

Third Grade

c. Justify your selections.

2. Visit a store or department handling "educational play-things." Compare the exhibit with that of the commercial toy department on each of the points listed under 1 *a*. Estimate the educational play equipment honestly, in terms of its appeal to children and its play possibilities.

3. Make a selected list as in 1 *b*.

PROJECT 6

1. Visit a local industrial plant which you think would be interesting and instructive to a second- or third-grade class. Make a proper appointment beforehand, preferably arranging to go with a number of fellow students. See all that there is to be seen, collect carefully any literature or exhibits which may be offered. Talk with the officers you meet, and find out their attitude toward visitations by groups of school children. Following the visit, reevaluate its possibilities for a class of seven- or eight-year-olds.

NOTE: The following list of possibilities is offered by way of suggestion: candy factory, ice-cream factory, dairy, milk-bottling plant, box factory, coca-cola plant, toothpaste manufactory.

2. Look up any exhibits, marionette shows, special museum offerings, or selected movie showings planned especially for children in your vicinity. Visit as many of these as possible, preparing a critical estimate of the values of each for preschool and primary-grade pupils.

PROJECT 7

1. Study the clinical facilities for children provided in your locality.

2. Visit at least two of the following.

Well-baby
clinic

Nutrition clinic
Orthopedic clinic

Eye clinic

Reading clinic

Dental clinic

Child guidance (or
psychiatric out-
patient) clinic

3. Write detailed accounts of your visit including:
Description of interesting or significant incidents.
Evaluation of relationship between children and clinic workers.
Description of educational activities carried on by the clinics both for children and parents.

PROJECT 8

Arrange to visit a nursery school, a public school kindergarten, and a freely organized primary grade with the purpose of studying the activities of the teacher in connection with the expressional activities of the children. Plan to be present, in each case, when the majority of the children at least are engaged in modeling, easel painting, block building, and other group and individual projects.

1. Study the teacher's role.
Is she dominating the group, directing everyone's work effectively or otherwise?
Is she working unobtrusively with individuals?
Is she letting the activity take its course without suggestion or interference, perhaps doing work of her own at her desk? Note comments, criticisms, or suggestions made by her to the pupils.
2. Study the children.
What proportion of them are actively engaged in doing something they appear to enjoy?
Are they making any interesting comments on each other's work?
Are they inviting the teacher's comments on their work?
How noisy are they? Is the room humming pleasantly, distractingly noisy, quiet and repressed? What, if anything, is the teacher doing about this?
3. Study the housekeeping arrangements.
Are materials accessible to the children?
Are they well arranged, in your opinion, or would you suggest changes?

Are paints, paintbrushes, crayons, clay, in good condition?

Is equipment for cleaning up easily accessible?

Do teacher and children attempt to tidy up and put things in place now and then as they go along? Note instances. Are there any safety hazards in the situation as you see it?

4. Note any element in the situation which you think might be managed differently and more effectively.

PROJECT 9

1. Observe a group of four- and five-year-old children at play. Record several bits of their conversation. Practice recording this so that the rhythm of the phrases is apparent. Or, record the conversation of a four- or five-year-old child in his home activities, using three 30-minute samples.

2. Arrange to visit a kindergarten during the period devoted to conversation. Record such a period as accurately as you can; compare with the notes made in (1) above.

3. Arrange to visit a primary grade, preferably grade II or III, during a language period. Note the following points:

How the period is motivated, by teacher, children, or both. The purposes of the activity, both the teacher's and the pupils'.

Evidences of integration with social studies or other curriculum areas.

The outcome of the period.

Interesting or significant parts of the discussion, *verbatim*.

4. Compare with (1) and (2), noting rhythmic qualities, extent of vocabulary, parts of speech, sentence structure.

5. Visit the children's room of the local public library. If possible, attend a story hour for young children. List the stories told, the children's reactions to them, your own reactions. Or, arrange to attend a story period in a kindergarten or lower grade.

6. Analyze the qualities of a successful story for a given level of development.

PROJECT 10

Visit a nursery school and a directed playground for primary school age children. Note two or three quarrel situations in each setting, explaining how the quarrel started, how it developed, how it ended, and the part played in it by any adult who may be present. On the basis of these observations, write a brief statement of what you believe the role of the adult should be in each of the following situations.

Age: four. Contestants: equally matched physically; psychologically, one given to aggression, the other timid and repressed. Subject: possession of a tricycle. Onset: Child A (aggressive) forcibly removes Child B from tricycle. B puts up ineffective resistance.

Age: six. Contestants: one physically inferior, given to excessive bragging and boasting, usually contriving to bully peaceable, well-coordinated child of same age. Subject: Child A (braggart) demolishes building of child B, remarking, "That's a dumb building!" Child B, turning at last, attacks Child A with outraged blows and tears. Child A shrieks for help, striking out ineffectually.

Age: seven. Contestants: equally matched in every respect. Subject and onset unknown. Arrive in the classroom and begin pummeling each other a few minutes before the school bell rings.

PROJECT 11

1. Arrange to visit a primary grade during a social studies period; if possible attend a discussion or debate.

Describe the activity.

Record the procedure followed by the teacher:

Is the activity conducted by a pupil chairman, or by the teacher?

How has it been motivated?

How is the subject of the activity related to the interests of the children?

Is the group as a whole active in participation?

In discussion are the children

a. attentive to the contributions of others?

b. courteous in rejoinder or interruption?

c. open-minded to the reasons of others?

d. ready to accept evidence?

e. apparently thoroughly aware of and satisfied with the results of the activity?

Note specific instances of any points covered.

2. Arrange to visit a kindergarten or primary grade, with a view to studying the science curriculum. If possible, be present during a natural science period.

Note the classroom setting; what evidences there are of science interests?

Find out if the primary grades have the advantage of a school museum.

What planned experiences have the children worked through so far in the current year? How well are the physical sciences represented? In the lesson observed, note the motivation, both teacher's and children's. Estimate the interest of the children, and the appropriateness of the discussion or experiment to their needs.

How far must the teacher rely upon vicarious rather than direct experience for the success of the lesson?

PROJECT 12

Arrange to visit a first grade during a period devoted to reading activities.

Note the evidences in the classroom that reading readiness has been built up carefully.

Note any evidences that reading activities are closely related to the children's other interests.

If possible discuss with the teacher her method of grouping the class for reading.

Try to be present when at least one group reads. Study the means used by the teacher for motivation; is there any real "audience situation" in which one child reads and the others listen with interest?

How does the teacher check up on seat work, including silent reading from primers, workbooks, games?

Note and discuss the routines established to facilitate the work during this period.

If you were the teacher, would you make any changes in routines?

Consider the question from the angles of

- a.* physical placement of groups
- b.* methods of distributing materials
- c.* methods of calling groups
- d.* methods of dismissing
- e.* methods of checking seat work
- f.* methods of helping each group evaluate its own achievement.

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